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THE PSYCHOLOGY  
OF THE  
UNADJUSTED SCHOOL CHILD





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THE PSYCHOLOGY  
OF THE  
UNADJUSTED SCHOOL CHILD

BY

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*Revised Edition*

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1937

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## PREFACE

The first edition of this book was written because the author had become convinced that certain adult maladjustments, known as functional disorders, resulted from faulty habits whose origin could usually be traced back to childhood. Faced with some uncertainty in his mental life, some conflict of impulses, or some indecision as to which course to pursue, the child is likely to try various adjustments until he hits upon one which seems to relieve the strain. Having no one to inform him as to the wisdom of his choice of behavior, and being ignorant of the effect of repeated reactions of a similar sort upon his later adjustments, he can do no more than continue to use some device which seemed to him to be temporarily effective. By accident he may be thereby developing a habit which will lead either to mental health or to some type of pathological condition of a serious nature. He may be ignorant of the probable outcome of his acts but his teachers should be able to analyze them with intelligence. The purpose of the book was to indicate to teachers how to guide children into habits of mental health and how to change habits which were likely to take the child into a mental disease.

Since the publication of the first edition there has been a remarkable awakening of the teaching profession to the need for adapting education to the pupil and for giving special attention to those personal habits which are not directly handled by the regular school curriculum. Teachers have been studying the subject of mental health

and have become convinced that mental hygiene must begin with the training of the child if it is to be effective. This widespread awakening on the part of teachers has vindicated the thesis of the first edition and the applications of mental hygiene principles to school children have provided experimental substantiation.

Material for clarifying the various topics, for filling in gaps, and for making the subject matter more concrete has been provided for the present edition by a study of twenty-five hundred children in the Psychological Clinic which has been conducted for children by the author at Northwestern University since 1925. The content of the book has been greatly changed so as to enable the teacher to apply the principles to her own school situations more easily than she could do from a study of the previous edition.

JOHN J. B. MORGAN

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS  
June, 1936

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# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE UNADJUSTED SCHOOL CHILD

## CHAPTER I

### EDUCATION AND MENTAL STAMINA

The majority of queer people whom we encounter did not become that way suddenly. They started early in life, often in infancy or childhood, and progressed by almost imperceptible degrees into the confirmed eccentrics that we now see. Similarly, the more extreme peculiarities that distinguish some types of mental disorder often grow gradually from small beginnings in childhood.

When we study the case history of an individual we can often discover when he began to develop improperly, at what point he began to perform the acts, and to form the mental attitudes, which led to his final disintegration; but it is a much more difficult task to study a child and to foresee the adult attitude or type of behavior that will result if he continues the actions which we now observe. It is this difficult task which we are about to undertake; but the difficulties need not deter us, for the rewards, in terms of personal satisfaction, that will come to the reader when he finds himself able to keep a child from establishing disintegrating types of conduct, will more than repay him for the efforts devoted to this study.

Teachers, parents, and others who play a major rôle in child training do not possess any natural ability which



will enable them to distinguish the dangerous trends in children from the more benign ones. The ability to make such discriminations must be learned. To clear the way for this learning certain prejudices must be overcome.

In the first place an individual may be extremely intolerant of deviations in others: there are certain weaknesses that he simply cannot endure; their presence makes him furious, and, without the least evidence of mercy, he wants to punish or isolate the person showing them. Now the teacher cannot deal sanely with her pupils unless she rids herself of this attitude of intolerance; and the nature of intolerance will indicate why this is so. To rid herself of this trait, the teacher must understand its causes within herself. If she has a weakness which she has had a hard time overcoming, it means that she has had to be on her guard lest that weakness should come to the surface and cause an undesirable act. If a slip does occur, she is filled with chagrin and remorse because of her failure. Such a struggle leads to intolerance with herself. Now, suppose another person exhibits the weakness that she has been struggling against — the tendency in herself of which she is so intolerant. Her attitude will be projected toward his activity and she will have the same reaction toward his conduct that she would have toward that conduct in herself. Furthermore, her feeling will probably be intensified, for the reason that the other person may perform the objectionable act with no feeling of remorse; and she will feel angry that he can do, with no apparent evidence of conflict, what causes her the deepest chagrin. Hence, she will want to heap upon this individual all possible punishment, because of her attitude of projected intolerance and because of the anger that she feels when he coolly does what she continually schools herself not to do. How can

she deal with her pupil unless she realizes the reasons for her attitude toward his conduct?

In the second place, her attitude may be colored by an entirely different condition. She may have had an undesirable trait which she has overcome with great difficulty and which she has tried by every conceivable means to forget. As a result, all the little evidences of it are ignored. This leads to a condition which is the opposite of intolerance — that of failing to see similar peculiarities in others. This is by far the more common attitude. We all recognize that we are not flawless and so, when we see some imperfection in others, we are likely to excuse the individual as we would like others to excuse us. This attitude is accentuated by the fact that, seeing things in others which are irremediable — physical defects, for example — we feel that we must overlook them; and our feeling is easily carried over from such irremediable things to those that could be remedied. Besides, we are taught by moral and religious leaders that it is not wise to pick little flaws in others' characters, when probably we have gigantic ones in our own. This is no doubt true if our purpose is merely to criticize; but the teacher's purpose is to help, and the first essential toward helping another is to recognize clearly his needs.

What a teacher must do, therefore, is to cultivate the ability to recognize clearly all defects and peculiarities in conduct and character, without any feeling of blame, resentment, or horror at the discovery. The deviations which we shall consider cannot be handled unless they can be looked upon with equanimity. The teacher needs first to have her ideas well established concerning what is desirable and what is undesirable, and then to aim to eradicate the one and cultivate the other; but this cannot be done by

the teacher who has not learned not to project herself into all the conduct of the children, with a resulting extreme intolerance or extreme blindness. Clear vision, self-control, and discreet common sense are the qualities that will be needed to apply the material presented in this book.

If we concede that a teacher cannot judge the significance of an act on the part of a child in terms of her personal attitude toward it, how can she evaluate it? The only safe criterion for judgment is a knowledge of where a particular act is likely to lead. Such knowledge can come only from a study of adult peculiarities. The teacher must have an accurate knowledge of the various types of adult behavior and must be able to discriminate clearly between wholesome and pathological mental traits. She must understand which bits of childish conduct are likely to develop into unfortunate adult traits and which are likely to grow into desirable ones. She must be able to discern the first signs of maladjustment in a child without assuming that he is already in a hopeless condition. She must be able to redirect him into more desirable substitute forms of conduct. Skill in guiding children into healthful mental maturity depends upon a knowledge of the causes of mental disorders.

Where do the personality peculiarities which we find in adults have their origin? If we encounter a man who is mentally deranged, can we attribute his condition to defective heredity, to physical injuries before or after birth, to faulty nutrition, to a disease of the nervous system, to faulty intellectual habits, to distorted emotional habits, to social or economic stress, to exhaustion, to the effect of certain drugs, or to immorality? If there were a simple answer to this question, the problem of mental adjustment would be comparatively straightforward and easy. We

could select the single factor that operated in any case, modify it, and effect a cure; or we could solve the problem of prevention by making certain that this causal factor was not permitted to function in normal persons. The truth is that there are a great many contributing causes in any case of personal maladjustment and we can safely say that no one cause, no matter how important it may be, ever operates in isolation.

This complexity of causal elements is an advantage when the problem of modifying behavior is attacked. If a certain type of conduct depended upon some one cause and that cause was beyond our control, it would be impossible to effect any change in that form of behavior. On the other hand, if several causes combine to cause an act, that act may be modified by a change in any of the causal factors.

The value of the multiple causality of mental disorders is strikingly evident when case studies of psychotic individuals have been made. In analyzing such case histories we can usually select some point in the evolution of the personality where the individual might have been made into a different type of person had he been treated differently, if some factor had been removed, or another had been introduced. Such an analysis is purely speculative but the hypotheses which it generates may be used in redirecting the development of other individuals and thus may be experimentally confirmed.

When such experimentation has been tried, striking changes have been effected by properly timed educational procedures. For example, a certain child's body, because of heritage or other uncontrollable factors, was smaller than those of his comrades. Because of this difference in bodily size, the boy developed a feeling of inferiority.

His supervisors arranged a series of experiences in which he was enabled to win a measure of success and by means of which he gained a feeling of self-confidence. Now he is a courageous, happy, energetic child instead of the cringing, fearful, morose person he had started out to become.

If we wish to avoid any attempt to redirect a child it is easy to hide behind the explanation that his difficulty is caused by some factor over which we have no control, but we should recognize that emphasis upon such an intangible cause is likely to be merely an excuse for our inertia. Even if such causes are operative, it is possible to modify behavior patterns by educational methods.

How far should the teacher go in her attempt to modify and redirect children in their personality development? She must realize clearly that the object of character training is not to smooth out all individual differences and make all adults alike, but to prevent gross deviations in the direction of undesirable traits. Each person, young or old, has his peculiarities, and these are not necessarily undesirable. Sometimes these idiosyncrasies prove an almost insurmountable handicap to the individual who possesses them and sometimes they are of great help in making social adjustments. Some deviations from the normal so repel that friendships are established only with the greatest difficulty; other deviations attract friends as inevitably as a magnet attracts iron. We all pride ourselves in the fact that in some particular, or in a number of traits, we are different from other individuals; we select our friends and the ones whom we love because they are different from others. The hypothetical man or woman, absolute normal in all his personal traits, certainly would not present an interesting or an attractive picture. It is impo

tant, therefore, that we realize that an abnormality is not undesirable simply because it is abnormal.

In all such deviations from the normal, however, there is a limit to what society tolerates; and when an individual oversteps this boundary he becomes an outcast. He may escape being confined in an asylum; but, if he is shunned by his fellows, he is more of an outcast than if he were institutionally isolated.

Whether a man is considered sane or insane depends upon the observer's point of view. A man is called insane when his conduct makes him intolerable to others; hence the real test of his sanity is whether or not he can adjust himself to life's difficulties in a manner that is approved by his associates. The real test of a normal person is whether or not he can make social adjustments.

Too often we picture as the ideal individual one who has a maximum amount of moral restraint; who is remarkably intelligent; who is extremely well-informed; or who is shrewd enough never to permit himself to become the dupe of circumstances. If this ideal does not preclude those traits which make the individual a desirable comrade, well and good; but too often such ideals omit very important elements, or, by overemphasis of certain traits, minimize the ones which make him socially desirable. He may attain wisdom, wealth, and a high standard of morality, but these are only means to one great end — that of attaining a wealth of personal contacts. One whose ambition drives him away from his fellows and tends to make him a recluse is sacrificing the most desirable thing on earth.

The main object of education, then, is to fit an individual to become successful in his personal relations with his fellows. Any educational system which does this is doing a real service for its students; any system which makes its

students less able to secure the love and friendship of other human beings is a failure. A well-balanced curriculum is one which gives a man the maximum advantage in the race for social recognition, and the narrow or unbalanced curriculum is the one which leaves him with a loophole in his character, so furnishing a handicap against which he must constantly battle. The success of an educational institution should be measured not by the facility with which the seniors can make orations or solve mathematical problems, but by the social adjustability of its alumni.

The very best indices of child adjustment are to be found in the attitude of the child toward other persons and in their attitude toward him. It is a good sign if he has a wholesome, cordial attitude toward the members of his family, toward his comrades, his teacher, and those whom he meets casually. A child is in need of guidance when he thinks his teacher mistreats him, that his brother gets more attention from his mother than he does, when he becomes violently attached to one parent while hating the other, when he fights with other children, when they tease him and exclude him from their games, when he takes delight in seeing others beaten or injured, or when he shows any similar signs of social maladjustment.

It should be pointed out at the very beginning of our study, moreover, that it is more important to understand the attitude which lies behind the various acts of the child than it is to analyze the acts themselves. A child may dislike another child, or other children may dislike him, for a great number of reasons and the manifestations of such antipathy can be understood only when the basic attitudes on both sides are clearly seen. In other words, any social maladjustment is a symptom that something is wrong.

and the main task which arises when such a sign is given to the teacher is to make a careful analysis and correction of the underlying factors, rather than to attempt a direct correction of the social disharmony. It is important to treat the cause of a symptom rather than the symptom itself. When the cause of the symptom has been removed the symptom will disappear. If the symptom is treated without any change in the cause the result may be more serious than the original condition, either the same symptoms will become intensified or others will be developed to replace them. Sometimes the teacher may be forced to deal with symptoms directly but such treatment should be regarded as a temporary expedient, a procedure to be avoided, wherever possible, in favor of dealing with causes.

It is more important to consider the significance of an act than to analyze the particular act itself, even if the act may involve a moral issue. Mothers, for example, ask continually: "What can I do to make my child do thus and so?" or "How can I make him stop doing a particular act?" They should, instead, endeavor to learn why he acted as he did and attempt to discover a means for changing the underlying factors of the situation. Discipline, as ordinarily conceived, is too often a means of forcing a child to act in a certain way with no real consideration of motivation. When used as a substitute for intelligence it is usually destined to fail.

Furthermore, adjustment should always be viewed as a dynamic process and never as a static condition. No person is ever free from the necessity of meeting varied conditions, some of them new and some old, and with each variation there must be a modification of response. Every individual must continue to readjust as long as he remains



alive. The mentally stalwart individual is the one who has learned *how* to adjust; each new situation is merely a challenge which he meets with intelligence, courage, and the wisdom gained from past experience. These lessons may be learned even if the person fails in the immediate crisis; one can sometimes learn more from failure than from success. Success is likely to focus the attention on victory rather than on how or why the goal was reached. Victory may be more weakening than strengthening.

The teacher's objective should be to teach the child to make his own adjustments. She may find it necessary to help the child to adjust in the early stages of his development; but she should aim gradually to teach him how to adjust for himself so that he can handle his problems with an increasing proportion of independence. The discerning teacher analyzes, foresees various possible consequences of intricate situations, helps when necessary, restrains the child only on rare occasions, all the while teaching him to become more and more self-reliant until, as an adult, he is stalwart enough to solve almost any problem which he may be called upon to face. Maladjustments in children should be considered merely as stages in the process of learning to be mature. Treated in this manner they lead to integrated adult life. Treated incorrectly they may become fixed into habits which manifest themselves as permanent, pathological maladjustments.

The teacher can well keep in mind certain principles in teaching children mental stamina.

First, she can teach them to be as objective, as keenly analytical, as intellectually honest, as impartial in evaluating their achievements in the realm of personality adjustment as they are in solving some arithmetical problem or in working out some educational project.

In the second place, she should teach them how to use various means for adjusting to their problems. Throughout this text we shall discuss various devices which persons use to adjust which we shall call *defense mechanisms*. Some of these are more desirable than others, but success depends upon acquaintance with all of them, with their advantages and limitations. The successful child is not a specialist in the use of any one of these defense mechanisms. He knows all of them and can use most of them when the occasion demands. The unadjusted child is often one who has learned only one way of meeting a difficulty and he attempts to use this one device in every situation, even when it is wholly inappropriate.

In the third place, children should be taught that people are different and that social adjustments depend upon learning the nature of these differences, as well as upon treating people differently in accordance with these variations. This lesson can be taught by arranging circumstances so that children come into contact with a great variety of individuals. The child with limited social contacts is inclined to expect all strangers to act in the same manner as the few persons he has known.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Be observant of the peculiarities of your pupils.
2. Learn to study these peculiarities in an impersonal way. Keep your own emotions out of the situation. (Remember that this is a hard thing to do and will require constant effort on your part.)
3. Let the only motive behind your observations be to improve the child.
4. In attempting to modify peculiarities let your goal be to make the child more socially adjustable and not to fit him into any pattern that you may have adopted.

## QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Why should peculiarities be modified?
2. In what circumstances are peculiarities desirable?
3. What is the social standard of success?
4. What incentive has a teacher to make her take an interest in the broader development of her pupils?
5. What two directions may our attitude toward peculiarities assume?
6. How does intolerance develop?
7. Why is intolerance a hindrance to the understanding of children?
8. What knowledge does a teacher need to develop a desirable personality in her pupils?
9. What advantage arises from the fact that any bit of conduct depends upon a multiplicity of causes?
10. Why should the teacher not attempt to make all children alike?
11. Explain the difference between "teaching the child how to adjust" and "helping the child to adjust."

## CHAPTER II

### UNDERLYING CAUSES OF MALADJUSTMENTS

A watch, while it is a fairly complex mechanism, has but one function — to keep time. It either keeps time or it does not. People tend to look at mental functioning in the same manner. They try to decide whether a man is sane or insane and, having decided, that is all there is to be done. Such a simplified conception of mental life does violence to the facts.

The nervous system is an essential component in every sort of mental activity and is more complex, by far, than all the rest of the body put together. Its very complexity makes it susceptible to direct physical and chemical injury from various sources, as well as to functional maladjustments which result from the failure of one part to harmonize in its activity with the other parts.

The teacher should never lose sight of the fact that peculiar behavior may be caused by direct injury to the nervous system or by diseases of various kinds. A maladjusted child should be examined by a competent physician before a program of re-education is instituted. The principle that should govern is to search for and to treat the most tangible factors first. For example, it would be foolish to begin a program to teach a child to talk slowly, truthfully, and logically when he was in a condition of high fever. The obvious thing to do would be to treat the cause of the fever and, if illogical utterances continued after the physical disorder was corrected, give him training in temperate, and correct speech. Or, if the content of

his ravings during the fever indicated a maladjustment, cure the illness and then adjust the difficulty that he revealed in his delirium.

On the other hand, it would be incorrect to assume that every maladjustment must depend upon direct injury or disease. A mental maladjustment may occur in an individual whose nervous system is physiologically intact. It is possible for a person to manifest a disharmony between various parts of his mental life. When such imbalance exists it is about as impossible to obtain smooth behavior as it is to drive a car efficiently by stepping on the gas and pressing the brakes at the same time, or by flooding the carburetor when the engine is hot. Such errors in adjustment, when not understood, can end in disturbances as serious as the more apparent maladjustments which depend upon injuries which can be clearly seen. In any case, the solution of the maladjustment depends upon a clear understanding of the causal factors.

Superstitious explanations are a usual accompaniment of ignorance, so it is no cause for surprise that many groundless reasons have been advanced to explain mental disturbances. Such explanations as demon possession, magic, animal magnetism, the evil eye, and the like, need not detain us, for they are not seriously entertained by thinking persons.

There is one unfounded theory, nevertheless, that still finds some adherents, namely, that mental maladjustments result from immoral behavior. Even when it is not held openly, this theory sometimes has a hidden effect on the attempts that are made to correct maladjustments.

At one time it was quite common to explain physical disorders in the same childish fashion. When knowledge of physiological disorders was in its infancy, the idea pre-

vailed that any sickness was the result of sin. One who suffered was being punished for misdeeds. The big problem was to locate the one who was to blame for misconduct and wreak vengeance upon him. Today we are concerned not so much with the discovery of the blameworthy individual as with methods of prevention and cure. The teacher is still often inclined to the old-fashioned view of mental disturbances, especially in cases of conduct disorders. If the blame is located and the offenders duly punished the teacher gives a sigh of relief. She congratulates herself on her cleverness; whereas she may have stupidly done nothing more than prepare the way for a repetition of the offense. Instead of fixing the blame, we need to locate the cause for a given offense, and there is a world of difference between the two. Punishment, if it is to serve any purpose at all, must be directed against the cause of an undesirable act and be of a nature to prevent a repetition of it. Hence, through the whole range of causes, from the most simple, objective, blameless cause to the most complex, abstract, and blameworthy one, we must attempt to retain the same attitude of dispassionately trying to correct abnormalities; not of wreaking vengeance on someone who has offended our æsthetic or moral ideals.

Just as one can learn to operate a typewriter, so one can learn to be a thief; to get sick to obtain what he desires; to give way to emotional expressions or to refrain from any expression of emotions; or to become deluded into believing what is obviously untrue. The correction of faults involves the replacing of bad habits by good habits. It is an educational problem and not one of retributive punishment.

The teacher will find it difficult to follow a consistent program unless she recognizes clearly that her task is to

change individuals by educational procedures, and unless she avoids the temptation to excuse herself by saying that she cannot modify a child who happens to have a poor heredity.

Although we may not be able to say much about their relative potency or the details of their relationships, we can state definitely that all the influences relating to the formation of mental traits can be classified into two general groups — hereditary and environmental. The hereditary includes only those that are transmitted through the genes in the germ plasm. The environmental includes all those that affect the fertilized ovum and the individual developing therefrom. Modification of the former is a genetic problem and can be done only by controlling future matings. It cannot be used in the betterment of any specific individual who may come to our attention. Certain influences which work during the prenatal or early postnatal period also fall into the irremediable past and have made an impression which cannot be modified by any hygienic program which we may wish to institute. If we can find something which is causal and which will lend itself to treatment, this will give us our opportunity to work for the benefit of the individual concerned. For these reasons, it is important that the teacher place not too much emphasis on the genetic and prenatal factors; not because they may not be important, but because she may be tempted to use them to excuse her educational failures. Even if heredity and prenatal conditions do operate, they are only contributors and their influence can certainly be modified by environmental factors.

It is not, therefore, sufficient for a teacher to decide that a child is in a certain condition because of its heredity, and to present this as a reason for placing him in the hopeless

class. What the teacher must do is to discover what elements in the training of the child have contributed to his condition, so that she may plan a program of education to bring out the best in him. A teacher must remember that, even though a person may have a certain tendency through heredity, this tendency can only operate under favorable environmental circumstances; and that one can, by placing him in situations where the hereditary factors become practically inoperative, produce an individual who shows few manifestations of having inherited the characteristic in question. One who has no tendency to tuberculosis might be able to live in an environment where he is continually beset with the tubercle bacillus and not succumb to the disease. One who has this tendency probably would succumb very readily. But do physicians for that reason say that, since a particular person has a tendency to tuberculosis, his case is hopeless, and abandon him to his fate? They rather try to prevent any infection, and if they succeed, the individual will never develop the disease, although he may have inherited the tendency. Psychologists, on the other hand, are too prone to accept without question a case history which shows that some trait may run in the family; and, if the trait appears in a certain child, assert that it is hereditary, inately sit by, and watch the child make a failure of his life. When a teacher uses a child's heredity as an excuse for her own laziness, she is making an inexcusable error; and it cannot be denied that many teachers are doing that very thing. I may have inherited an extremely ugly mole on my nose but do I sit back and say, "It is inherited and so it will have to stay." I rather go to a surgeon and have nature's defect remedied.

In many cases the origin of an observed trait can be attributed either to heredity or to environmental influences,



the choice being largely a matter of the prejudice of the observer. The following case illustrates this.

A girl ten years of age was brought to a psychological clinic by her mother with the report that the girl was nervous. She was not so orderly as other girls. She was determined to climb trees and go swimming, and the mother was afraid that she would harm herself. One day she ran down the road for a mile and was later found wading in a stream. This child had been examined a year before coming to the clinic by a psychologist, who concluded that the case was probably one of inferior mentality coupled with "neurotic tendencies" due to hereditary causes. The reasons for this conclusion were: first, that the mother had a nervous breakdown four years before the child was brought to the clinic; second, that when the mother was fourteen years of age it was feared that she was going to have St. Vitus' dance; finally, that the grandmother who entertained this fear was reported nervous as well. This looked as though the child inherited her nervousness, until one came to examine the child. In the presence of the mother the child did queer things. She twitched at times and tended to be silent when questioned. When taken from the mother, she was quite different. She talked in a natural manner and her nervous symptoms disappeared. She said that she liked to swim and climb trees but that her mother punished her whenever she did, on the ground that she would hurt herself. As a matter of fact the mother's reaction had no connection with dangerous situations on the part of the girl; she simply was not happy unless the child was sitting quietly in her sight. She took out her instability by whipping her daughter when she had been frightened by some innocent thing that the child had done. The girl frankly told the story of running away.

Her dog began chasing a pig, and she, being interested in the contest, followed them down the road until she found herself at a stream, and then she went in wading. The mother punished the girl not because she had done anything particularly wrong or dangerous but because the mother herself had worried. A cousin lived with them who was more nervous and irritable than the mother and this cousin also continually punished the girl.

Now, one might say that this was a case of heredity; but, even if it were, the environmental situation is certainly the more important thing. It was evident after a few minutes' conversation with the mother that the real problem was the mother and not the daughter; the mother tried to suppress all activity in a child inclined to be unusually active. The girl was not unintelligent; she had an intelligence quotient of 98 and her tendency toward activity could surely be directed by one who made a rational attempt to do so. Certainly the mother's effort to suppress the child's activity was a causal factor much more tangible and amenable to change than the hereditary factor. Why relegate such a case to the limbo of heredity because the mother and grandmother both were "nervous"? The remedy for a case of this sort lies in changing the social conditions. The long-time point of view of the mental hygiene program may lead to valuable work in the field of genetics, but for the educator the practical problem is to try to change the individual.

By all means, let us breed as strong a race as possible and, in doing so, take advantage of all the knowledge the biologists are able to give us. Nevertheless, the teacher should remember that she receives a child after the inheritance factors are fixed and that it is her task to enable each child in her care to make the best adjustment that

is possible for him. The teacher's work is the immediate and practical task of changing the individual. It is well that she avoid the temptation to ascribe all teaching success to her teaching skill and to blame failure upon heredity.

On the other hand, the teacher should avoid another type of error. She may become so immersed in teaching that she ignores evidences of some physical handicap, some disease condition, or some other hindrance to the normal development and adjustment of the child which might easily be remedied were she alert to the significance of its presence.

The teacher is not supposed to give medical examinations but she should know some signs which indicate the need for such an examination so that she may refer the child to a physician at the proper time. She owes it to herself to remove physical handicaps, whenever it is possible to do so, so as to make her teaching most effective.

A brief review of some of the most obvious conditions that may interfere with normal adjustment may guide the teacher in directing the child to the proper agency for examination and help.

Some part of the nervous system of the child may have been injured by a prenatal condition, by birth injury, because of malnutrition or some infectious disease such as meningitis or poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis), through the action of some drugs such as alcohol, morphine, cocaine, or of some metal such as lead or mercury.

When a child has been damaged by any of these conditions or agents he should be given the best medical care so that the destructive process may be stopped. Thereafter, he should receive the benefit of the best possible instruction. The re-education of children who have had

neural injuries has more promise of success than is commonly supposed. Lashley and others have experimentally demonstrated that, after the removal of portions of the brain and the consequent loss of specialized habits, animals are capable of relearning those habits.

Some diseases, such as anemia and tuberculosis, involve a depletion of energy. Syphilis may cause definite neural deterioration. Any disease, whether it has a direct effect on the nervous system or not, can interfere with the best adjustment of a child; and every teacher should be alert to the slightest indication of illness and see to it that the child is examined by a competent physician.

The endocrine (or ductless) glands secrete substances (called hormones) which are taken directly into the blood stream and are conducted by the blood to every part of the body, exerting a marked influence upon general bodily activity, the output of energy, and chemical processes in the body, thus influencing profoundly the personality development of the child. The most important of these glands are the thyroid and parathyroid glands, located in the neck; the pituitary, located at the base of the skull; the adrenal glands, located above the kidneys; the pancreas, located at the small intestine just below the stomach; the pineal body, located at the base of the brain; the thymus body, located in the front of the thorax; and the sex glands.

The thyroid gland regulates the speed of chemical action in all parts of the body,\*controlling, to some extent, the formation of fat, the nutrition of the muscles, neural activity, and digestion. The pituitary has some regulatory effect upon bodily growth, sex maturation, bodily temperature, and the activity of the muscles of the viscera. The parathyroid regulates the calcium content

of the body. Animals deprived of this gland manifest tremors, convulsions, salivation, and an enormous acceleration of the rate of heart beat. The core (medulla) of the adrenal gland plays an important part in emotional behavior and the outer layer (cortex) is connected with the development of secondary sexual characteristics, such as the growth of the beard and the changing of the voice. The pancreas secretes insulin, a sugar-regulating substance, and failure of the pancreas is the cause of diabetes mellitus. The pineal gland secretes a hormone which stimulates mental, physical, and sexual maturation. The thymus gland seems to have an effect counter to that of the thyroid. A good illustration of this opposed function of the two glands may be seen in the effects of feeding the hormones from the two glands to tadpoles. Fed with thyroid, the tadpoles changed quickly into frogs. Fed with the thymus hormone, the tadpoles grew into large tadpoles but their metamorphosis into the frog state was suppressed. The hormones from the sex glands exert a major influence on the development of those features which differentiate the sexes.

What significance has all this for the teacher? She should be alert to indications of endocrine imbalances and see to it that, when some developmental anomaly is present that might result from an endocrine disturbance, the child is examined and treated (if necessary) by a competent specialist. Gigantism, dwarfism, obesity, over-activity, sluggishness, incongruous sexual characteristics, precocious or retarded puberty, infantilism, or any condition which might depend upon a faulty chemical adjustment in the child should be construed as evidence that he should be given the benefit of the latest knowledge in this field.

As an illustration, a boy was reported because he was

indifferent to class work, lazy, and sluggish in all his behavior. He was somewhat stout but this was attributed to his laziness. Examination showed that his consumption of oxygen was below normal (which suggested thyroid deficiency) and, in addition, he was infantile in his sexual development (which suggested possible thymus, pituitary, or adrenal cortex involvement). Glandular treatment not only remedied these physical conditions but overcame his sluggish indifference in the classroom.

To be sure, an organic cause of maladjustment does not function in isolation, and other types of corrective work must usually be inaugurated after the physical condition has been remedied; but it is certainly the best procedure to take care of the physical factors, or any other condition that lends itself to specific treatment, before applying the more complex processes of re-education and psychotherapy. No one engaged in child guidance should permit himself to ride a hobby of any sort. Instead, he should give the child the benefit of every type of help which is available. Teaching is much more likely to be effective when the pupil is in perfect physical health.

What part do environmental crises play in producing maladjustments? Adolescence is supposed to be a period of great stress and is blamed for many child maladjustments. Economic stress and its accompanying hardships have been blamed. Other writers have stressed the significance of emotional crises, such as the death of a loved one, failure in a contest, the results of temporary lapses into unethical conduct, and the like. Those who emphasize the importance of external difficulties naturally reason that the best way to safeguard the mental health of children is to shield them from as many of these conditions as possible.

Another point of view recognizes that periods of stress are inevitable. We may be able to avoid economic stress but we all have to go through a period of adolescence and we must, sooner or later, suffer because of the death of some loved one. Why not develop stamina in children so that they will be able to endure any trial or hardship no matter how severe it may be?

Both of these views deserve consideration but one should not exclude the other. The child must develop stamina and independence gradually. Temporary failures are signals to his teachers that stresses are being applied too fast. He needs a little more protection for the time being but, at the same time, he needs more strength so that, at some later time, he will be able to stand up against a situation which now is too much for him. For the properly trained child there are no "great" crises. He has faced difficulties of increasing severity and has developed so gradually the ability to meet them that there is no great jump from tiny issues to major ones. He faces the major responsibilities of life without realizing that he is doing anything heroic.<sup>1</sup> Adolescence is a period of unusual stress only to the child who has not been trained in the preceding years and the solution is temporary help accompanied by training which will make up for the apparent weakness.

The direction of a child along the path of mental health is much more successful if the guide has a clear conception of the end dangers to be avoided. All major mental

<sup>1</sup> This self-reliance without self-consciousness is illustrated in the following incident: A six-year-old boy became separated from his mother in the loop in Chicago and walked 15 miles to his home in Wilmette. "I wasn't lost," he told his parents. "I remembered how we drove to town and where home was and I just started walking there." Eight hours after his separation from his mother he walked calmly into the house and said, "Mother, will you give me something to eat?"

disorders may be classified into the following twelve groups and should a child seem to be proceeding toward any of them the teacher should take steps to change his course without assuming that he is in a bad condition already. The place to avoid getting on the wrong path is near the point where it leaves the right road. Everyone strays temporarily at times. It is the teacher's task to see that her children do not wander very far in the direction of mental disorders. The following outline of conditions to be avoided should simplify for the teacher the task of guidance.<sup>1</sup>

✓ 1. *Feeble-mindedness* (Hypophrenosis). Feeble-mindedness may be present at birth from unknown reasons, among which may be: hereditary factors, glandular disturbances of parents, prenatal malnutrition, birth injuries, or some disease of the mother during gestation. It may be caused by degenerative diseases of the brain, some types of poisoning, gross injury to the nervous substance, or some diseases of childhood. In short, feeble-mindedness is a general term given to any individual who has a marked intellectual deficiency, no matter what factors may have contributed to that deficiency.

2. *Brain diseases* (Infectious psychoses). There are some micro-organisms which may invade the nerve substance and cause injuries which affect the mental life of the one infected.

3. *Brain injuries* (Traumatic psychoses). Injuries which result from falls, bruises, gunshot wounds, and the like may have their effect on the mental life of the individual.

4. *Old age deterioration* (Senile psychoses). As we age our brain begins to function less and less effectively.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from: Morgan, John J. B., *Keeping a Sound Mind*, The Macmillan Company, 1934, pp. 418-422.



This is inevitable, and about all any man can do about it is to live as wholesomely as he can, so that old age will not come prematurely, and make the best of it when his intellectual powers do begin to wane.

5. *Bodily malformations* (Somatopsychoses). In this group are placed various kinds of bodily disturbances. Probably the commonest are those caused by maldevelopment of some of the ductless glands. These conditions usually show themselves by gross bodily changes.

6. *Poisons* (Toxic psychoses). Various poisons may injure brain tissue. Some of these are secreted within the body and may be the secondary results of some infectious disease. Others, such as lead, alcohol, morphine, and cocaine, are taken into the body from without.

7. *Epilepsy* (Epileptopsychoses). Not all epilepsy is accompanied by brain disorders, but some types are. There is much to be learned about epilepsy, and as we learn more about it our fears about it will diminish. There is a general feeling that much may be done for this disorder by means of proper nutrition.

NOTE: It can be seen that all of the above seven groups depend upon some physical condition of disease, that prevention is a problem of physical hygiene, and that treatment is synonymous with treatment of the physical condition which underlies the mental disease. The best prophylaxis against these is rational care of the body.

The next five groups, as far as is known, do not depend upon any physical disease or any injury to the nervous system. They are caused by unfortunate ways of meeting life which have become habitual through repetition.

8. *Shattered personalities* (Schizophrenia or dementia præcox). These are the persons who refuse to face reality, who build up false ways of reacting to situations which confront them, or who refuse to respond at all and

live in a world of their own. They begin by setting up false values in life and then determining to maintain the fiction that things are as they have designed them, ignoring anything which does not fit in with their little plan. There are different types, depending upon the method they adopt to evade real life. Some merely become indifferent drifters — the “happy hooligans” and “ne’er-dowells.” Others regress and live in the past. Others blame their failures on other persons. Still others react to a part of life and ignore the rest, becoming warped and twisted personalities.

9. *Emotional extremists* (Cyclothymoses or manic-depressive). In this group are placed those persons who have built up an extreme habit of going to emotional excesses. Instead of meeting the factors in life which produce emotional tensions, they feed upon their emotions and let the external situation continue to incite them. Meeting the objective situation directly is the only valid way of making an emotional adjustment. Instead, these patients will go from the extreme of wild excitement to that of deep depression, building up their emotional life rather than building up a way of meeting life’s difficulties.

10. *Intellectual extremists* (Paranoia). These persons evade the issues of life by building up defenses which appear reasonable but which are rationalizations. They are dominated by “wishful thinking” and tend to develop delusions. When things go wrong they build up a system of persecutory delusions which appear so valid that the outsider is inclined to believe them. The way to avoid this tendency is to learn the habit of facing life instead of hiding behind the excuse that the other person is always to blame.

11. *Evaders* (Psychoneurotics). These are the unstable persons who escape difficulties by devices which deceive both themselves and other persons. In most cases the trickery is not conscious but is adopted because the patients are not heroic enough to face life as it is. There are four types:

- a. Those with fears and compulsions.
- b. Those with chronic fatigue.
- c. Disease hunters (Hysteria). These escape mental conflicts by developing symptoms of specific diseases and by the use of similar complaints.
- d. Worriers.

12. *Queer personalities* (Psychopathic personalities). In this group are placed mild cases who are too queer to be called normal, who usually have intelligence enough to know what should be done but too little consideration for others to do the sensible thing. If they run athwart the law they may become criminals.

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### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. A knowledge of the causes of maladjustments is essential before treatment can be intelligent. If treatment is ineffective it is quite probable that the analysis of causal factors is wrong. Instead of blaming a child for his failure to respond to treatment, make a deeper study of the entire situation.

2. The teacher's purpose should be to correct maladjustments and never to wreak vengeance. This purpose should guide the teacher whether the fault be a simple error or a moral lapse.

3. Be on the alert for signs of disease, endocrine imbalance, or physiological disturbances; and see to it that competent physicians examine children who manifest such signs.

4. Refer frequently to the simplified classification of mental disorders as destinations to be avoided; and see to it that no child is permitted to wander very far in the direction of any of them.

## UNDERLYING CAUSES OF MALADJUSTMENTS 29

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Why should a maladjusted child be given a physical examination?
2. Point out some unfortunate consequences of the theory that mental maladjustments result from immorality.
3. What should be the teacher's attitude toward the problem of the relative importance of heredity and environment?
4. What are some physical conditions that may cause mental maladjustments?
5. Show why physical disturbances do not preclude the possibility of educational procedures.
6. Name some endocrine glands and indicate how they influence mental adjustments.
7. Compare the two views (a) that a child should be protected from environmental conflicts and (b) that he should be made stalwart enough to meet severe difficulties.
8. List the twelve groups of mental disorders.
9. How should the teacher use her knowledge of mental diseases to prevent maladjustments?

## CHAPTER III

### ESSENTIAL ADJUSTMENTS OF CHILDHOOD

In order for a child to mature into a well-adjusted adult he must make progress along several lines. Interest on the part of teacher or parent may be centered so exclusively on progress in academic lines that evidences of a lack of progress in other directions may be ignored until the consequent maladjustment has become excessive. As a sequel to such a lack of perspective, we may find many adults who are warped and unbalanced in their mode of living and outlook on life, although no one seems to know exactly how they learned to become so eccentric. A person of superior intellect will hate his fellows with such violence that he eventually perpetrates some violent crime as an outlet for his hatred. A woman who is socially cultured will enact a temper tantrum when she is thwarted in some minor matter. News articles abound in illustrations of the behavior of such persons. A college professor was arrested for peeping into a girl's dressing room. A man with a doctor's degree, temporarily out of work, killed a social worker who told him that he had been taken off the relief rolls.

All these major evidences of maladjustment in persons who seem fairly well balanced in most particulars comes to most of us as a rude shock. They seem to come without cause. Closer scrutiny usually will force us to the conclusion that a better adjustment could have been made had some teacher been more discerning and had she noticed the first signs of distortion in development.

To be sure, children should not all develop over the same pattern, but the teacher should not be blinded by an exceptional excellence in some particular which the child may be using to hide a failure in some other important aspect of development. Let us examine some of the fundamental adjustments which every child should make and which should be balanced with each other.

In the first place, the child must adjust his primitive impulses to the restrictions of the physical and social order in which he finds himself. By a series of bumps, falls, burns, scratches, and shocks he learns some of the fundamental laws of nature. Protection by elders may soften some of these experiences, but he *must* learn the laws. Some feeble-minded children persist in banging their heads against a hard wall or hitting themselves with their fists, but such events are rare in the ordinary schoolroom.

Some children persist in dangerous behavior in spite of their knowledge of the possible consequences. For example, one child made repeated attempts to jump out of the window. Investigation showed that this was not a lack of knowledge but an attempt to enslave the father who was thrown into a panic every time the boy approached a window. Another child insisted upon sitting in the street-car tracks in order to enjoy the sound of the screeching brakes of the oncoming car. Attempts to teach this boy a better way to satisfy his appetite for noises and excitement failed and his final adjustment was death when the car brakes did not operate effectively. A child must learn that the laws of nature are inexorable. He may effect a change in the social, economic, and moral orders but he cannot change the laws of the physical and chemical universe.

The physical aspects of the environment are but a small.

part of the objective world which demands adjustment on the part of the maturing child. Through a long period of trial-and-error adjustment, society has established certain standards of conduct. Through these established traditions certain things (they may be acts, thoughts, or attitudes) are absolutely forbidden, others are tolerated, others given slight approval, and still others lauded as very commendable. Each individual is confronted with these ideals or standards sooner or later and is expected by society to conform more or less closely to them. In such expectation, society makes little allowance for the native equipment of a man or for any peculiar circumstances which he may have encountered. If an individual has not the necessary background to conform to her standards, steps are taken to force him to conform, and if force is not effective, the individual is deprived of freedom in order to safeguard the others who do conform. Regardless of what tests we may have formulated, no matter what academic ideals we may have set up, the final standard of adjustment is the degree to which the individual can adapt himself to social conditions as they exist.

To be sure, social conditions vary somewhat in different communities. In some places the laws are more rigidly enforced than in others; thus an individual may get along successfully in one community, yet be immediately in difficulties when he transfers to another. While these differences in tolerance may seem large to the individual coming in actual contact with them, they dwindle when looked upon in perspective; for they affect, as a rule, only borderline individuals, whose adjustments are neither wholly bad nor wholly good.

When the child is born he is, from the adult point of view, a complete egotist. The outside world means noth-

ing to him except in so far as it causes him comfort or discomfort. If discomfort results from any situation he raises a wail of opposition and continues this until he is made comfortable. Because of his helplessness and his unyielding insistence upon being waited upon until absolutely satisfied, he succeeds in getting the complete servile homage of all those about him. At one time in each person's life, the time of helpless infancy, he is lord of all he surveys, he is a despot of the worst kind. He cannot remain so; as he develops, society requires that he act differently.

The first social situation to which the individual must adapt, therefore, is the fact that he cannot have without restraint everything his organism desires. No longer helpless, he cannot force his desires on others by his helplessness; and, relieved of this compulsion, those about him do not choose to yield to all his whims. Undoubtedly he may be quite successful at first in securing indulgence, but when the novelty wears off the parents or nurse become more or less bored with too great serfdom and begin to cut down on their attentions. Thus arises the first great social adjustment of the child — he must learn that prolonged self-gratification is possible only through a consideration of others.

Every capitulation on the part of the child comes about only after a struggle in which he uses persistence, trial-and-error attempts, and random activities of all sorts in an effort to gain the desired end. Anyone who has observed an infant attempting to gain food will have observed this. The child will go into a state of continued contraction, holding his breath and becoming tense all over. When this serves no purpose, the child will start all sorts of random activity. He will move all the muscles he is capable of moving, not the least of which will be the muscles con-



nected with articulation. If this does not bring the desired food the child may set up periods of quiet interspersed with periods of tension, giving rise to a rhythmical series of efforts. This sort of thing only lasts for a short time in the career of most infants.

The child soon attempts to get food only on sight of the mother or nurse. In other words, he has learned his first lesson; he has learned to connect with the fulfillment of his desires the effects of certain acts of his own on animate and inanimate objects in his surroundings. As the mother is the one who most naturally satisfies the hunger of the child, she is the one to whom the child first transfers his affection. It must be remembered, however, that the only reason the child gains a love for his mother is because the mother has gratified the desires of the child. In loving the mother the child is loving himself; his is a positive response toward the first object which gratifies his desires.

This first lesson of the child is somewhat of a shock to his ego. When he finds that he is not the center of the universe, that the whole populace is not bent upon serving him, he learns that he can obtain homage from only a small part of it by specific kinds of behavior of his own. This small part therefore takes on great importance for him. It becomes an integral part of his happiness and therefore a part of his ego. For instance, he reacts toward everything which favorably strengthens his connections with his mother and reacts against everything which hinders this relationship.

Love for one's mother or nurse is simply the first step in social development, but it furnishes the key to all future developments in this direction. One loves his mother because she gratifies his desires, but he later learns that full

gratification requires the co-operation of other individuals besides his mother; so, just as he learned to incorporate his mother in his little world, he gradually includes others until he becomes considerate of large numbers of people. He has learned that, at times, great pleasure will come to him if he foregoes personal pleasure for the pleasure of others. If this doctrine is merely precept to him he can never live a normal life. If he has learned it through experience and it has become a part of his existence, his conformity to the golden rule is a part of his habit life and means little struggle. This struggle persists throughout life and adjustment between egotism and sociality is continuous.

To most people the statement that we are fundamentally egotists, and that all our conduct is planned for some reward, will meet with strong opposition; but such opposition is simply evidence of lack of personal candor. To be sure, our conduct frequently is far from infantile selfishness, but a real understanding of human behavior necessitates a tracing of the motive life back to this stage.

While the child is learning that it does not pay to attempt to gratify his own desires without consideration of the wishes of others, he is encountering another difficulty in the way of complete satisfaction. He finds that the immediate gratification of a desire often prevents him from enjoying something that would have given him satisfaction had he foregone the first pleasure. He, for instance, omits his afternoon nap so that he can continue his play, and learns to his chagrin that his afternoon's indulgence has cost him a trip to the movies. He learns that his failure to consider the future made him pay too big a price for the small pleasure of an omitted nap. Thus, he has to learn the lesson of foregoing pleasure for future gratification.

This, too, he has to learn through painful experiences. It is a very hard lesson and few people make a final, completely satisfactory adjustment in this respect. At first it appears in very simple states; the child must not grasp every article of food that appears on the table as soon as he is seated. At first he does so; but as he is restrained and finally punished if he does not refrain and eat in due form, he learns that he gets more to eat and more social approval if he eats with reserve than if he eats like an animal.

Moralists misleadingly elaborate upon this phase of development and hold up ideals which the individual can achieve only by long periods of prolonged abstinence from certain immediate pleasures. As a result many persons tend to feel, quite erroneously, that their future happiness is in direct proportion to their present sacrifice. For instance, a man saves his money so that he will have plenty to enjoy himself when he gets older; but unfortunately when he gets older, he has acquired the habit of doing without the pleasures that money will buy, so that he cannot enjoy his money when the planned-for future arrives. Take another and equally familiar example. In a still further elaboration we build a vast ideal picture of a future life filled with pleasures to compensate for our failure to receive pleasures in this world. This may be merely a form of consolation for disappointments, but it can also be so exaggerated that one denies himself all sorts of innocent pleasures so as to increase the amount in store for him. It takes an exceptional individual to attain the proper balance between delayed gratification, that is, the withholding of gratification, and present indulgence. No teacher can give her pupils this balance unless she has learned the lesson herself.

The forces which control the adjustments we have been discussing have been largely external, the laws of the physical and social world. Beginning very early and increasing in significance with age, there comes into the situation a different type of control, a conscious subjective control. The transition from objective to subjective control involves no mysterious change but a learning of the new patterns of subjective control as a substitute for the patterns of objective control.

This learning follows the pattern of the typical conditioned reflex, the only difference between it and the simple laboratory illustration of the conditioned reflex being one of complexity. For example, when a dog learns to secrete saliva upon hearing a bell, this reaction is unconscious learning, due to the fact that the bell has been sounded at the same time that meat was presented. When a child has been repeatedly presented with the complex situation of food on the table and persons around the table and, at the same time, has been forced to wait until the other persons begin to eat, the presence of the others becomes a sufficient stimulus for him to refrain from eating until the proper time, even though he is not forcefully restrained. He is aware of what is going on, that he is waiting for the others; but the significant fact is that he learned to substitute his own control for the forceful control from outside. Later on the habit may become so firmly established that he is not aware of the conscious control; he waits automatically. Any failure to exercise such self-restraint is not explained by saying that the child lacks "self-control"; it means that he has not been taught properly.

This progress of the child, from an objectively controlled individual to a subjectively controlled one, starts

with simple beginnings and progresses until, as an adult, the great portion of the child's acts are dominated by subjective standards of behavior. These standards of conduct have been variously called attitudes, moral codes, or ego ideals. By whatever name they may be known, they are effective only when they have been learned in the manner we have described. A difficulty arises from the fact that a child may learn the verbal formulation of standards of conduct, formulations which he may know how to recite glibly, without having learned to apply them to his own conduct.

For example, the child may have learned the verbal formulation of the principle of delayed gratification. He may be able to say that he will gain more pleasure if he does not indulge to excess at the moment, without having learned by experience to wait, to work, and to anticipate his rewards until the proper time comes to enjoy them. Delayed gratification is never sufficiently immediately satisfactory, no matter how much the ego may endeavor to consider it so; therefore the individual is presented with the temptation to steal a little gratification. Such attempts to deceive others lead to the tendency to be untrue to one's self — a most pernicious and insidious tendency which is at the root of many instances of maladjustment.

The child has the ideal of delayed gratification, but on the sly he tries to gain a march on the rest of mankind by stealing some immediate gratification. If not checked this leads to the most pernicious form of hypocrisy. Honesty becomes a scheme to keep the other fellow from taking your things so that you can steal his. We berate the profiteer but we are very willing to make a little excess profit ourselves. We preach generosity to others (they should be generous toward us) but we are inclined to be

generous only in so far as such generosity will net us some reward. One cannot carry on such attempts to deceive others without learning to practice the same duplicity upon himself. A boy is promised that, if he stays in the house and takes care of the baby, he can go swimming in the afternoon. As soon as his mother leaves he goes to the barn to play with the gang while the baby shifts for itself. If he is clever enough the mother does not learn of his faithlessness and he gets his swim as well as the stolen pleasure of the morning. His mother in her ignorance is quite pleased with the whole affair. "How easy!" thinks the boy. He makes excuses to himself and pushes aside the thought that he has cheated his mother and the baby. If one can only practice such tricks upon himself he is sure to be happier than if he is aware of all the unpleasant things! Thus he begins to deceive himself, to invent false logic to uphold his own ego, to excuse his faults by blaming others, to forget certain acts of which he is ashamed, and to invent pleasing explanations. In this way, he begins to destroy his personal insight.

To be sure, deceit practiced upon others does not inevitably lead to self-deceit; but unless one learns to cheat others he will not be likely to cheat himself. The teacher should see that this lesson of fair dealing is learned in the schoolroom. Situations frequently develop in which the children put up with something they do not like, so that they may enjoy something in the near future. The dishonest can steal some of the future reward but are likely to be caught by the other children if they attempt to do so. In these experiences, the children can be taught to postpone some of their pleasures, to pay for them by present discomforts, and to be honest in their dealings with others in this respect.

Another essential adjustment of childhood is the development from dependence to independence. The child is born almost entirely helpless, dependent upon the help and protection of adults for his very existence. The progress from such a condition to the aggressiveness and initiative we see in the normal adult is a long and arduous journey. Independence has various aspects which may be classified as physical, intellectual, and economical.

The importance of physical independence is clearly appreciated by all who have to do with child development. From the earliest attempts of the child to walk alone, to talk, to dress himself, to feed himself; to competition in physical sports, learning to drive a car, or acquiring skill in writing, piano playing, or typewriting; the child is carefully guided with sympathetic encouragement from all interested adults. Should the child have some physical defect which interferes with the acquisition of physical independence, he is usually given special training to enable him to reach as high a degree of skill as his physique will allow. Occasionally, a child will delay such learning, staying at some babyish level in order to prolong the pleasure of continued attention from elders. Or, he may have the mistaken notion that it is the mark of gentility to be physically incompetent, to have others to wait upon him. Such cases are rare. Any tendency to thwart the growing physical independence of a child is usually met with an active fight on the part of the child. He wants to do things for himself and he will usually brook no interference.

Intellectual independence seems to offer more problems, probably because so many persons are afraid of intellectual freedom. We teach a child motor independence without much fear that he will run amuck. Occasionally

we find a "bully" but he is soon brought to a sane adjustment. Any excessive physical independence we usually regard as temporary, knowing the child will soon come to a normal expression of his physical freedom. We do not seem to view intellectual independence and freedom with the same complacency. We give the child a set of creeds and codes to which he is supposed to subscribe unthinkingly, and when he begins to question them we are afraid to encourage his questionings. We seem to be afraid that, once having been encouraged to think for himself, he will discard all intellectual restraint.

How can a child be taught intellectual independence? If we teach him to arrive at the formulation of his own creeds and codes by thinking through his own problems, there will be no trouble. The child can be taught to think for himself only by encouraging him to do so and, if our beliefs are sound, he will usually come to them by his own rational processes. If they are unsound, it is better that he is taught how to substitute better ones. At any rate, a belief that will not stand the test of clear thinking is not of sufficient value that we should keep children in intellectual infancy in order to safeguard it.

The child who is throttled in his thinking will seldom make an intellectual contribution to mankind. Should such a repressed child eventually gain what he thinks is intellectual freedom he is likely to run wild, being more concerned with the fact that he has freedom than in a consideration of how he can best utilize that freedom. The clear thinker is more concerned with the correctness of his rational processes than he is with demonstrating his freedom of thought. So-called radicalism is the outgrowth of a lack of training in clear thinking in early years, coupled with excessive intellectual restraint at the



time that the child should be learning independence of thought.

While the young child has no conception of the problem of economic independence, he comes gradually to awaken to the need for providing for his own needs and for those who may later be dependent upon him. It is this need for financial security which makes necessary the selection of a vocation and which provides the drive behind any ambition. Some individuals remain in economic babyhood, unable to provide for themselves; and these have frequently promoted a philosophy of life which excuses such immaturity, saying that the rest of society owes them a living. By a queer distortion of logic, they try to make it appear immoral to have been thrifty and a virtue to be penniless. History shows that such ideas are likely to be promulgated in periods of financial stress, and at other times, by individuals who have encountered financial misfortunes. Adults with such a viewpoint are likely to instill it into their children.

There is nothing that will give a growing child more confidence in himself than the assurance that, at some time, he will be able to take his place somewhere in the economic world and be able to make his own way without dependence upon parents, relatives, or government. Growth in this direction is dependent as much upon learning to budget funds, learning to spend wisely and within one's income, as it is upon actually earning money. Children should be taught that spending more than one has means debt and that debt spells economic slavery for the individual, the corporation, or the government.

Much development must take place in connection with those activities which are essential for the preservation of the race. The lower animals reproduce in a mechanical

fashion through the operation of reflexes. In human beings, the carrying on of the race is intertwined with a vast number of social institutions, with the profoundest emotional experiences, and with a great number of intellectual and economic activities. Beginning as a biological function, race-preservation has become a by-product of a highly developed form of social relationship, known as romantic love. To speak of the reproductive aspect of human life merely as the expression of "race-preservative instincts" is certainly an oversimplification of the facts. We are not innately interested in the next generation; we do not begin in infancy planning to hoard money so that we can endow schools, colleges, and hospitals to assist in the elevation of the race in generations to come. The wish to have a family is developed only after a long period of training. If we do mature in this respect we will, nevertheless, devote much thought and energy in providing for future generations. It is a sign of infantilism when we look upon children only as assets to increase our own comfort or security and when we saddle our offspring with debts and other obligations which will interfere with their progress.

Intertwined with, and probably serving as a foundation for, this cultural aspect of race-preservation are biological urges, physiological tensions, and reflex behavior patterns. In early life the infant learns that stimulation of certain parts of the body, the lips for example, gives rise to pleasurable sensations. Discovery of these parts comes accidentally in connection with the satisfaction of hunger, being fondled by nurse and other adults, or through exploratory movements of the child's own initiation. Once having found such a sensitive locus, the tendency is to continue the situation which brings the pleasurable sensa-

tion. A child, after he has gratified his hunger, may suck his thumb or anything else which may be within his reach, in order to prolong the pleasure arising from the sucking movements. It is in just this manner that the child accidentally learns the sensitivity of other portions of the body and likewise attempts to prolong the situations which first brought this sensitivity to his attention. These first organic pleasures are very vague and indefinite in their character; but there is a very definite line of progress from them to later social activity. The child learns that while he can derive pleasure of this sort from his own activity, the pleasure is enhanced when aroused by others, most often by the mother or nurse. This leads to the natural desire for the mother or nurse to fondle him, rock him, carry him, or to continue any contact that leads to the extension of this vague organic pleasure. In his attempts in this direction he is almost sure to be rebuffed, especially if the organic pleasure becomes more definite and localized in the genitals. Elders very emphatically teach the child that any attempts to gain pleasure from this source are not viewed with approval, and so the child must either desist or fall back upon autoerotic (self-gratification) habits. The ordinary child soon passes over this period; only a few have a prolonged fixation here, and these few have to be given special attention. The majority find that the social displeasure that their acts incur is not compensated for by the vague pleasure they derive from the acts; they desist, and pass into a period of latency until the budding of adolescence. It is quite likely that the social standard is the best thing to use to get a child over a threatened autoerotic habit. He can be told in a simple, non-emotional way that people do not usually do such things, just as they do not eat with their knives. It is

only when a child has been improperly treated that such an appeal proves ineffective.

Normally the child learns so many other means of securing organic pleasure — such as the glow that comes from exercise, a swim, hot or cold showers with a violent rub-down, the tingle that comes from playing in the snow or the warmth of the sun on the hot beach — that he seldom prefers to isolate himself and suck his thumb, or play with his toes or other parts of his body. It is only when the child has been thwarted in his natural tendency to extend the range and variety of organic pleasures that he reverts to the infantile methods of isolation and self-stimulation. Give him numerous substitute outlets and these will readily displace any tendency to self-gratification.

If the child has learned his social lessons properly, and has developed a variety of activities which he can thoroughly enjoy, by the time he comes to adolescence he should be weaned away from purely selfish gratification; so that with the coming of maturity he already has established friendly relations with numbers of individuals of the opposite sex. He has joined in their games, has learned to adjust to their personalities, recognizing that they differ widely as individuals (for example, some being better "sports" than others), and has learned to enjoy their association. With this foundation the romantic period that comes at adolescence is not so likely to lead to a queer distortion of the romantic sentiments. Members of the other sex are looked upon neither as saints to be worshipped or as fearsome objects to be avoided; they are human personalities. The best way to prepare a child for adolescent adjustments is to develop in him a wholesome play relationship with members of the other sex from the very earliest years of his life.

It may be well to review briefly the stages though which a child goes in progressing from the love of himself to mature interest in others. The first individual one loves is himself, and he usually receives early a strong impression of his own importance which he never wholly loses. The next fixation (strongly organized attachment) of his life is for his mother, then possibly for some other member of his family, then for some individual who resembles himself (usually of the same sex), and finally for one of the opposite sex. The love attachments of any person influence very radically his whole outlook upon life and so cannot be overlooked in any analysis of human behavior. We all recognize this in a general way. When a boy who has been slovenly suddenly becomes neat in his appearance, we say that there is a girl in the case. We need only to carry our vision a little farther in order properly to appreciate what is happening in many cases of strange conduct.

The boy is weaned away from self-love because he finds love for his mother more to his advantage. He later learns that love for boy companions is in some ways more satisfactory than love for his mother, and finally that love for a girl is more satisfactory than love for a boy. Now, in any stage along this line of progress, if he meets an insurmountable obstacle he is likely to return to the previous stage. Likewise, the advance from one step to another carries traces of the previous situation along with it, so that he is likely to choose a girl who resembles his mother or himself in certain characteristics which are important to him. The progress is not smooth and easy in every case. One receives certain tendencies to advance, then a tendency to go back, and so progress comes only by an interrupted series of advances. Mothers and teachers often

fail to appreciate what is going on during these stages and because of their ignorance make a normal development harder for the boy or girl.

Take for instance the period when the boy is being weaned away from his mother. The mother dislikes this because she wants him dependent upon her; she gets satisfaction from his dependence. How many mothers understand that the normal boy has to get away from her "apron strings" in order to be normal? The mother bemoans to her friends the fact that her boy no longer enjoys sitting on her lap and receiving her caresses. She should be glad that he does not. When the boy who is in this stage meets some difficulty and comes running back to his mother, she receives him with open arms and is delighted that her "baby" has returned for fondling. After such an episode the boy is ashamed that he has failed and in a subconscious way hates his mother for making his battle harder. In order to steel himself against a future break he has to develop a hostile attitude. The mother, by her influence during the period when the boy is at the height of his attachment, has untold opportunity to determine the future course of his life, and the things he can be taught during this period will affect him permanently; but, eventually he needs to get away from her and to depend upon himself, and, when he comes to the stage for being independent, any return to the mother-fixation period is a sign of weakness. The comrade who teases and taunts a boy for being "tied to his mother's apron strings" is often much more of a true friend to him at the transition period than is the mother who encourages him to remain a baby. This does not mean that the boy need become estranged from his mother, but that he must work toward the place where he does not rely upon her care and comfort.

It must be remembered that love for others is primarily a way of getting self-gratification; it is built upon this desire. The final lesson of love for others is never learned until one sees that the highest peak of pleasure is reached only when he has given maximum pleasure to another. The peak of this development is attained in making wife or child supremely happy. Too many people, even among those who seem, superficially viewed, to be very happily married and to have a happy family, are still in love with themselves and fundamentally unsatisfied. If a woman marries in order to permit a man to make her happy, if she has children solely that she may have someone to love her and be a source of pride to her in her old age, she is inviting disappointment.

Just as a socially well-developed man takes no pleasure in sitting down to a big meal by himself and gorging, so no one who has made the proper advancement in his sexual life has real pleasure except in the complete happiness of another person of the opposite sex. If one is simply trying to use others as tools for his own gratification he gains no real pleasure.

While the later stages of this progress may seem far removed from self-gratification, it should be remembered that the only reason for any stage of progress must be the yield of more satisfaction than was afforded by the stage preceding it. If there is no incentive for advance there will be no progress. Hence, too much satisfaction for the advances already made, too much emphasis upon the pleasures afforded at any one point in the ladder constitute a bar to progress. The individual must learn that each step furnishes its own type of reward, and that each successive reward increases in the keenness of its satisfaction.

Most important in all these phases of the adjustment

process is the necessity for the child to keep plastic, to retain the ability to continue adjusting. Once having met a situation successfully, the child is prone to act in a similar fashion in the future when any difficulty arises. If he finds one person he likes, he will tend to cling to that one to the exclusion of others; having found one satisfying reward, he will want to strive for that goal to the exclusion of all others; or having gained the sense of independence from one performance, he will tend to repeat that act endlessly.

How can a child be kept plastic? Not by minimizing the progress he has already made, not by depriving him of his old friends, not by snatching away his rewards, nor by destroying his feeling of independence, but by giving him a succession of new situations can he be taught the pleasure to be derived from making new adjustments. If a child becomes prematurely fixed in certain patterns of behavior, it is because he has been taught by those who have not had ingenuity enough to diversify his teaching.

Even when a child makes a good adjustment he should not be taught to specialize in it, for it may not be as suitable in some future situation as it is in the present one. He should learn that, while a problem situation has some elements that are similar to others he has experienced, it also has new elements. Teach him to search for those new factors. If these new features are ignored he will be likely to lose the most valuable training for adjusting to life.

At various times attempts have been made and are still being made to organize a definite scheme that will forever end the struggle for the individual — that will make the pathway clear to all. This is impossible. There can never be a fixed and definite philosophy either for the individual or for the race. Each person must learn to adapt



himself to life as he finds it. The best that educators can do is, profiting by the mistakes of others, to arrange external conditions, of which the educator's training is itself one, in such a way that pupils will be assisted over difficult stages.

To train a child to retain the proper attitude throughout all his adjustments is an art. Skill in this direction distinguishes the real teacher from the mere "servant" of the school system. When the child comes to school he is rarely very far along in his social development. He has learned to transfer a little of his affection to his mother and perhaps his brothers and sisters; but on the whole he is still almost completely wrapped up in himself, still an egotist. How is he to be made into a social being?

It cannot be done by holding before his eyes an abstract ideal of generosity and consideration of others. To be effective, an ideal must contain a reward, and this reward must not be so far removed that the child thinks its attainment impossible. The postponement of gratification is a gradual process and must be built up slowly. Hence, it is useless for the teacher simply to tell the child that if he is generous he will be happier than if he is ungenerous. Most frequently this means nothing to the child; if he should understand the meaning of the statement he will not believe it to such an extent that he will act on it. Just as he is taught other things, a child must be taught generosity through simple, objective beginnings. The reward for generosity is social approval. If it happens that the child does not have an appreciation of social approval, teach him to have it by seeing that he gets a taste of it. Then, after he has learned to crave social approval, direct things so that he gains this reward only when he has displayed generosity.

Recognizing social approval as a constantly present and always powerful factor to be used in training the child, the teacher needs to watch its use carefully. The natural temptation is to display the child one likes or who does good work, to the disgust of those whom one does not like or who cannot do excellent work. This does not make the displayed child social; moreover, it has a bad effect upon those who are thereby humiliated. The flattered ones will become arrogant and even more selfish as a result of such treatment, and the neglected ones will probably form a coterie of their own and set up their own standards of approval. These standards will involve the exclusion of any boy or girl who does anything that the teacher approves, as well as those having anything to do with the "teacher's pets." For the teacher to succumb to this temptation, therefore, is to hurt directly the children of both classes; moreover, by putting herself out of touch with the pupils, the teacher destroys all chance of giving them future aid in character building. After such a state of alienation has been created the teacher is powerless. The boy who is punished by the teacher sometimes becomes the hero of the reactionaries. She wonders why the boy is so immune to punishment and fails to realize that every punishment she administers is regarded by him and all his comrades as another mark of distinction. Teachers sometimes ridicule a child when he fails to get his lessons, or when he fails to do something that is required. Shame should never be used as a punishment. If the teacher ridicules the child for violating some law of her own she may be making a hero of him because he has been brave enough to defy her. She thinks she is punishing him but she may be making him the leader of the "gang." This is not, of course, the only danger.

The actual procedure to be used to avoid this result and to train the child out of his egotism must be the product of the particular situation, and often requires ingenuity — ingenuity such as was shown by the teacher in the following incident: A teacher of the first grade had a very troublesome boy in her class, who defied her in every possible manner. His father punished him and various attempts were made to correct him, but with each attempt he grew in favor with the rest of the boys. The scheme was finally devised of organizing a fraternity, whose standard was self-control. In order to make it sound imposing, it was called the "Gamma" fraternity, and each member had the privilege of wearing a distinguishing pin. Anyone in the class who showed self-control was admitted to membership and could be dropped when he lost self-control if the rest of the children agreed that he had violated the standard. The uncontrollable boy was made a charter member and, through the course of a few weeks, everyone in the class was enrolled. The change in the boy was remarkable; he had been bad to gain social approval, now he was good and "self-controlled" to gain the same end. His metamorphosis had a good effect on all the rest of the children as well, and the teacher's position was strengthened with the whole class.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Teach pupils the joys of achievement and thus enable them to meet difficulties easily.
2. Never let a child feel that it is a hardship upon him when he must restrain himself in order to avoid injurious clashes with his physical and social environment. Make him feel at all times that he is busily engaged in learning the laws of the game so that he can enjoy living more completely.

3. Adjustments are learned by adjusting and not by learning abstract formulations of moral principles.

4. Teach the child that the process of solving a problem is more enjoyable than any reward he may receive for having solved it.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Enumerate the essential adjustments that a child must make.

2. Why are adjustments to the social environment more difficult than adjustments to the physical and chemical environment?

3. Trace the pathway from egoism to love for others.

4. Show how to teach a child to delay gratification.

5. Explain the learning process involved in developing subjective control.

6. Enumerate some of the different aspects of independence which a child should develop.

7. Give some reasons why adults fear teaching the child to become intellectually independent.

8. Why is intellectual independence so important for the child?

9. Discuss the values of economic independence for the child.

10. Trace the successive stages in the development of love for the other sex.

11. Explain how a wholesome attitude toward the other sex before adolescence can be established and show how such an attitude is essential for normal sexual adjustments in later life.

12. Discuss the importance of keeping the child plastic.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HABIT OF SUCCESS

The most satisfactory way to respond to a difficulty is to meet it squarely; when one does so he has a fair chance of winning. Any type of compromise is fraught with disadvantages, and as the compromises increase in complexity one encounters greater and greater chances of losing in the struggle. Consequently, before taking up the various forms of compromise and the mental disturbances which arise from their use we will outline the successful way to meet difficult problems.

We recognize the successful man as soon as we meet him, not by what he wears, nor by his conversation, but by the self-confidence with which he reacts to every situation as it comes before him. He has learned to be master of himself and his environment, and all who meet him can see that he is master. We are not easily deceived by sham success; we all are able to spot the "bluffer," the failure who assumes the air of self-confidence. Among the dogs in our laboratory we have a cowardly one. This particular dog barks the loudest when a stranger approaches. He runs out and snarls and gives the stranger the impression that he is the bravest dog in the kennel. All one needs to do, however, to test him, is to stop and look directly at him. He will run into the kennel with his tail between his legs and will whine in the most agonizing fear. Just as this dog cannot very long deceive the stranger, so the person who has learned to be a failure cannot long deceive his comrades by bluster. He overdoes the initial attitude

of self-confidence, and, despite this attitude, retires at the slightest discomfiture. A simulation of the attitude of success cannot pass for the real thing.

Let us first consider the essentials to success. We all recognize that success in any struggle requires what we commonly call fortitude; what a certain gentleman called "intestinal stamina." Now, if this characteristic is a mysterious gift which is donated to some individuals at birth and withheld from others — a characteristic that cannot be developed or improved — it would be useless to discuss it here, except to indicate that its lack might lead to dire results. There is much scientific evidence to show, however, that fortitude is not any such mysterious entity, but a trait which is largely the result of training. The characteristic which is back of all manifestations of courage is the tendency of all organic matter to resist any situation which tends to destroy the integrity of that bit of matter. It is possible to take a tiny one-celled organism and demonstrate that this primitive creature will attempt in various ways, which indicate increasing persistence, to rid itself of some outside influence which, if long continued, would do the creature real harm. Furthermore, it can be shown that the amount of energy which such a creature puts forth is in direct proportion to the strength of the opposing situation; and the failure of one attempt to remove it simply increases the creature's efforts.

This is the same sort of thing that happens when a man is manifesting courage. The only difference is that the man's demonstration takes on a more complex form due, of course, to the complexity of his organism as a whole. A normal man, when confronted with a situation which causes an unsatisfactory state of tension, will exert himself to remove or modify the cause of that condition, and will

continuously increase that exertion. If his increased effort is successful, the unsatisfactory tension is removed and a feeling of satisfaction supersedes. He is rewarded for the exertion of this energy; and will, of course, tend to make the same sort of response the next time he meets with opposition. It can be seen from this that threatened failure is a stimulus to effort, and that this reaction, if sufficiently sustained, modifies the conditions so that the individual succeeds.

Fortitude is, then, nothing but a name for the habit of success, and cowardice is a name for the habit of failure. Both start with the same tendency to meet opposition with extra energy; the difference in result is purely the difference in the degree to which the extra energy is sustained and continuously reapplied; and such difference in degree is itself simply the result of difference in training. The same laws of learning, therefore, govern the acquisition of courage as govern the acquisition of skill in typewriting, piano playing, or any other complex act. If a man cannot operate a typewriter we know that he has not been trained to do so; or that, if a consistent effort has been made to train him, he has not the ability to learn. Just so, if a man has no fortitude it is because he has not had it developed; or, if a fair attempt has been made in the proper manner to develop such courage, it is because he has not the ability to learn. It is not just, therefore, to conclude that an individual has any innate lack unless the proper methods to teach the individual have been used.

For the sake of illustration let us agree that if a child yells for three hours in order to obtain a piece of candy he shows persistence. How would we go about training a child to yell three hours for a piece of candy? If the candy did not cause the child to cry at first we would have to

teach the child to like it. Then suppose we got him so that he would cry when he saw it and was kept waiting ~~an instant~~ for it. If we give the candy to the child at that time it will be a reward for his crying. The next time that he sees candy he will tend to use the same method for securing it, for each time we reward him by giving him the candy when he cries. After we have shown him that crying is a good method to use, we begin to delay the surrender of the candy so that he has to cry a little longer each time. We must be sure however not to withhold it too long; when we see that he is about to weaken and give up, we immediately give in and he secures the candy. In this way we can gradually prolong the preliminary requisite crying period until we can extend it to any desired length. It is just such training that teaches a child to match his will against that of his parents; and if he is a good student he often wins the day and proves more than a match for them. A baby at birth does not display violent temper, pouting, or long continued crying in order to gain what he desires; he learns such types of behavior because he is taught by his parents to persist in that particular form which irritates them most easily. Hence, if you have a child as a pupil in school who sulks, who goes into a tantrum, who is a cry-baby, or has any other such method of securing his desires, you can be sure that some of his guardians are brought to terms very readily by such conduct. The only means of correction is to teach him some other and more desirable way of persisting in his endeavors to get what he desires. On the other hand, the parents often unconsciously punish the child for being good — he gets no reward for this except neglect. In such a case, as far as personal comfort is concerned, being good is a failure, and the child often will not attempt the types of conduct which lead to such neglect.



In other words, in the direction of being good, he develops the habit of failure.

Now, because childish persistence may often manifest itself in ways which are not wholly desirable, we tend in our educational program to stifle persistence. We forget that, regardless of whether or not we like the form of action expressing the willfulness we find in the child, the willfulness in both cases has been developed by the same means; and in either case the trait is the habit of success, which is certainly more desirable than its opposite — that of vacillation, spinelessness, and halfhearted irresolution. We want the child to persist, but we often stupidly insist that he persist in the things we like and not in the things which are satisfying to him. If the child persists in activities we do not like, we dub him obstinate, stubborn, "hard-boiled," perverse, unruly, or headstrong; if he persists in actions which please us, we speak of him as determined, strong-willed, resolute, brave, unflinching, or game to the backbone. In teaching our pupils to be pliant in some things and resolute in others because of our likes and dislikes of the things themselves, we have in our modern system too much tendency to overemphasize the yielding attitude. The range of originality which we will permit in our schools is, as a rule, very narrow; and our great desire seems to be to teach the child to conform. Persistence is not often formed by outlining definitely the path to be pursued and then urging the child to follow. Under such definite guidance he is constantly watching for the approval of the teacher and the slightest nod of dissent will cause him to discontinue his own course and search for that which pleases the teacher.

This country does not favor extremely restricted regimentation in our educational system. We expect

individuals to grow to maturity equipped to pursue some creative activities instead of conforming blindly to the dictates of someone who happens for the moment to represent the constituted authority. It is more desirable to create in our schools individuals who will be capable of facing the world of reality with self-assurance instead of weaklings who will cringe at the first sign of difficulty or who will develop some abnormal type of conduct as an escape.

Does the success of one person necessarily involve the failure of others? Some persons think that it does and emphasize the necessity of preparing children for failure or of providing some sort of social security to take care of the failures. Some even put a premium on failure and insist that we should teach children to be "good losers."

The emphasis that has been placed upon competition as the channel through which to achieve success is responsible for this opinion. The child is made to feel that he can win only through the defeat of others. He can only exalt himself by humiliating someone else. Such victories do not build the habit of success. Instead, they fill the victor with temporary and false pride tempered with a fear of future humiliation.

The habit of success is best taught by a series of victories over objective difficulties — victories which are not contingent upon the success or failure of others. The feature to be stressed is the conquest over an obstacle. The glow should come from the feeling of having solved the problem at hand, together with the assurance that something has been learned which will help in the next difficult situation.

In order to make the habit a fixed one it is important to see that the child repeatedly overcomes objective

difficulties. A mistake is often made by giving the child problems which are too difficult. The first situations should be so simple that victory is practically certain, and the child should be supervised closely enough to enable his supervisors to render help at the right moment if he is not quite able to meet the difficulty. After each victory the degree of difficulty can be slightly increased. It is not so important that the child learn *how* to win any specific situation, but he must learn the winning attitude. He must be more sure of himself as the result of each difficulty he meets.

The child with a strong physique has a better chance of developing the habit of success because he tends to overpower physical obstacles by sheer physical strength. Other persons, nevertheless, have been able to override physical weakness and gain the feeling of self-reliance in spite of physical handicaps.

The winner who has his attitude directed continually toward the process of winning is not so much concerned with the reward he gets, not so much with his own happiness at having won, not with the fact that another has lost and has been humiliated, not with the fact that his friends approve, but rather with the sheer sense of comfort in relaxing after he is sure that his problem has been solved. He can relax because he knows his immediate task is completed and because he knows that he will be able to solve the next difficulty when it does arise.

Children respond differently to different challenges. Unless the teacher is able to discover what will stimulate each child she is likely to permit some very alert child to become indifferent or rebellious. It is rather easy to find children who have very superior intelligence who, although capable of doing excellent work, are failing in school, who

are developing habits of laziness, and who are turning to misconduct for a means of excitement. The experimental placement of such children in more challenging situations is likely to prove very clearly that the trouble was in the repressive atmosphere where work was too easy and uninteresting. One boy posed as dumb because he had not only found school work tedious but had been smart enough to discover that those who did good work were simply given a greater amount of the same sort of tiring and uninteresting exercises. He pretended to be dull in order to escape doing more tedious work. When given some definitely stimulating task, he brightened up at once and entered into his new activities with real zest.

The teacher must recognize that the attitude of the child toward his tasks is much more important than the difficulty of the task itself. Teachers have been heard to complain that children will not respond to their problems, as though there was something lacking in the child; whereas the failure to respond was a reflection upon the methods employed to challenge the pupils.

The habit of success should not be confused with recklessness. Recklessness is, instead, the usual accompaniment of the feeling of failure. For example, a boy of 14 with an I.Q. of 122, was reported to be failing in his school work, to be dishonest, to steal, and to be the performer of daredevil escapades. His general appearance and approach did not seem to fit with the report that had been given of his misconduct. He was a mild-mannered boy and not in any sense the gangster type. When his confidence had been obtained, it was found that his apparent aggressiveness and lawlessness were compensations for a feeling of hopelessness and failure which grew out of the fact that he had diabetes. He had been placed on a rigid

diet, had to take hypodermic doses of insulin, and had no hope of doing anything other than remain on this strict regimentation for the rest of his life. The prospect was so discouraging that he had adopted his present "don't care" attitude. "Life is so short, why not get out of it what you can while you are alive instead of trying to prolong it by all these diets and shots?" he asked.

The daredevil is likely to be one who has a feeling that he has lost already, and so why not take one more reckless fling! The one who really has the habit of success rarely boasts and struts. This boy did not need to have his recklessness curbed by showing him the dangers he was facing; he knew that already. He needed encouragement so that he could take a more hopeful outlook on life. When he was convinced that he had something worth-while for which to live he ceased to be reckless and lawless. Today this boy has developed an intense interest in bacteriology and gives promise of becoming an expert in this field. He forgets all about his treatments except while he is taking them. They are just as much of a routine, and just as unemotionally performed, as shaving in the morning.

No matter where or how we live, each of us will have many mental battles. If we hope to be successful we must, in addition to mustering the habit of success to which we have been trained, insistently meet each issue squarely, instead of trying to excuse ourselves, endeavoring to forget what has passed, or attempting to compromise in any particular. We must admit, to be sure, that even if we look each situation squarely in the face we may not be strong enough to meet the issue, and may fail; but we know the chances of such failure are less than if we refuse to meet the issue. When we ignore the issue we are sure of defeat.

We may intrigue ourselves into thinking that, after a cowardly retreat, we have won; but our self-deception is not often very complete, and we can seldom deceive others. For example, a little boy was one day very much frightened by a dog. He screamed and ran in great fear to his father, who was standing close by. As a matter of fact, the dog had merely been playing with the child, who had been told earlier that this particular dog would not hurt him. After he reached his father he became very much ashamed of his cowardice, but did not want to admit the fact. In order to uphold his self-respect he said, trembling with fear and excitement all the while: "I am not afraid of that dog, I am not afraid of any dog. I could hit that dog and knock him clear across the street. I could whip any dog. I could even whip Daddy!" Do you think that the father was deceived by these little protestations of bravery in the face of evident fear, or would any other bystander have been deceived? As a matter of fact the boy himself was aware that the remarks were idle; he had to increase the degree of bravery indicated in each statement because the previous one was obviously insufficient to cover the fear reaction. This is a childish reaction, of course, but a good many adults are doing exactly the same sort of thing. The chief difference is that as people grow older they become cleverer and more subtle in the ways in which they express their idle boasts and more skillful in covering the real reasons for their pretensions.

The only way to train a child to a life of wholesome maturity, to a life of mental balance and sanity, is to teach him to face each reality in life squarely and to solve every difficulty in a straightforward fashion. If he becomes engrossed in life as a stimulating enterprise, he will be more interested in the challenge that life offers than in intro-

spectively analyzing his feelings, in measuring the degree of success he is achieving, in comparing himself with others, or in fleeing into various unwholesome defense mechanisms or neurotic behavior patterns.

The habit of success is the goal of every individual and this chapter is given as a pattern for normal development which each teacher should strive to substitute for the unwholesome behavior patterns which we shall describe in later chapters. When a faulty habit pattern is found in any child, treatment consists in substituting for the faulty habits the habit of facing life squarely. This is the habit of success.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Let the child use his own initiative; do not suppress independent efforts. Help him only when necessary. Do not let him blindly follow your suggestions.
2. If a child is stubborn let him work his willfulness out on problems instead of tempting him to resist your disciplinary system.
3. Cultivate the desire to persist in a task once started until it is successfully concluded. Do not train the child to substitute outside rewards for the reward of accomplishment.
4. Teach the child to take defeat honestly when defeat does come.
5. Make sure that the child gets no social approval as a result of blustering.
6. Try to make children see the value of meeting difficulties squarely.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe the type of training that is necessary to develop courage.
2. How can persistence be developed?
3. What are some ill effects of competition?
4. Is the habit of success dependent upon failure in others?
5. In what way does a strong physique make it easier to develop the habit of success?

6. How do individual differences influence the problem of developing courage in children?
7. What is the significance of recklessness?
8. How can the teacher determine when recklessness is a compensation for fear?
9. Name some of the characteristics of a genuine habit of success.



## CHAPTER V

### DEFENSE MECHANISMS

At times practically all persons seek some relief from the stress of living but, normally, such periods of retirement are of short duration and are viewed simply as a preparation for the struggles to come. The stalwart individual gives less concern to the problem of escaping from the conflicts of life and more to the task of learning how to meet them more effectively. How to adjust is the problem of youth; how to escape from the need for adjustment becomes the problem of old age, when physical stamina begins to run low. Consequently, our emphasis should be placed upon teaching children how to meet life's issues and not how to avoid them. The best security for old age can come only when the individual, in his younger years, has learned how to adjust and, through this knowledge, has been able to build up faith in his own ability to adjust. If childhood is taken up with a mad scramble to escape life's conflicts, old age intensifies the fear of living and repose is impossible. Instead of attempting to escape life's conflicts, youth should be exhilarated by struggle and should regard difficulties as a challenge, an opportunity to compete in a stimulating game.

We can best conceive of the real nature of mental struggles by keeping before us the analogy of the ordinary type of warfare. In conflicts between human forces in international warfare we may have one of three outcomes: one side may gain *victory*, may be forced to *compromise*, or may suffer complete *defeat*. It is seldom that one side

suffers complete defeat or attains complete victory; the result is usually some sort of compromise. One side or the other may yield less in the compromise; we usually consider the side victorious which yields the less when it comes to final settlement. Seldom do we attain to complete victory in our mental battles; fortunately it is also seldom that we suffer complete defeat. We are all striving, however, to have all our compromises fall as near as possible to victory and as far as possible from defeat.

So much for the outcome of our mental warfare. Let us now turn to the different methods of fighting. In tribal or national warfare there are two types of battle, the open face-to-face battle, and the guerrilla method in which each side hides and attempts to sneak up on its opponent and attack it at an unexpected moment or from an unanticipated quarter. These two types of battle also occur in mental life. We have the conflicts in which all the elements are perfectly obvious, in which we are conscious of the nature of the trouble and of the possible solutions. When this is the case we can meet the issue squarely and the outcome will be determined by the interaction of these purely conscious elements. More often the warring elements are not consciously appreciated by the individual. The forces behind the conflict were mustered far back in the infancy of the person. They have been pushed into the background, or into the unconscious realm, but still have been gathering force as the years go on, and so influence to a large extent the issues which confront the adult. This guerrilla warfare is so predominant in most mental conflicts that the real nature of the difficulty is not apparent on the surface. The enemy comes out only in disguised form, is welcomed as a friend, and in the end turns upon his victim at the most inopportune time when the victim

is off his guard. To have one's enemies behind one's back is poor strategy; and it is even worse to push one's mental enemies into the subconscious.

No method of cure for mental disturbances of psychic origin can be permanently successful unless it is designed to bring the elements of mental struggle into the consciousness of the individual patient; any attempt to cure which results in pushing these elements further into the background is merely storing up future trouble for the individual. One may, through faith in a talisman, charm, amulet, shrine, or individual, temporarily submerge his troubles still deeper, but they are still there. One cannot destroy dynamite by burying it, and the more covering you place over an explosive, the more violent will be the damage when the eruption does occur. Knowing this, the teacher's task is to discover the first signs of a mental struggle in her pupils, see that the nature of the struggle is clearly apparent to the child, and then help the child to win the battle. If, ignorant of the presence of mental conflict, the teacher helps the child to forget his trouble, to repress rather than to fight it, she is doing the child untold injury and paving the way for future serious maladjustment.

What are the weapons that are used in waging mental battles? The general name for any device which a person uses in order to make an effective fight when a mental conflict arises is *defense mechanism*. Some devices are ineffective and lead almost certainly to defeat. They should be avoided. Some are valuable only upon rare occasions and should be used with great discretion. Others are very valuable and do harm only if utilized excessively. Obviously, the successful resolution of a mental conflict is dependent upon the correct choice of defense mechanisms,

the correct and timely use of them, and the quick change from one to another when occasion demands.

In later chapters we shall discuss in detail the various defense mechanisms that may be used and shall point out the dangers as well as the advantages of each type. In this chapter we wish to stress the need for perspective in planning a campaign. If children are left to themselves they certainly do not have an adequate breadth of knowledge to enable them to select the best weapon to fight their battles; it is the teacher's task to give assistance in analyzing problems and in teaching children how to be more efficient in fighting their mental battles.

It is very important to study each problem child individually. There may be some guiding principles which can be utilized to furnish clues as to the general area of difficulty, but success depends upon getting behind vague generalities to specific factors. It is too easy, and usually futile, to hide behind some general formula instead of making a specific and individual analysis and then applying the remedy to the exact seat of the trouble.

Another danger is the temptation to search out some defense mechanism that the child is now using and then to prevent him from using it effectively. The idea seems to be current in some circles that the use of *any* defense is bad, and the favorite type of treatment seems to be to undermine the defense of a child and leave him floundering in his search for a substitute. Instead, a new defense should be provided which is better than the old one. For example, a child is found who is doing various things to gain attention. The remedy that some propose is to see to it that he gets no attention. Instead, he should be taught a better way to get attention; or he should be given some substitute which will make attention less important for

him. A defense mechanism is merely some learned type of behavior and the only way to change it is to substitute another behavior pattern for the undesirable one.

How should the teacher go about discovering the presence of or the significance of a conflict in a child? She should take cognizance of any situation which indicates friction between her and a child or between a child and his classmates. This is the first indication that something is wrong but it tells nothing about what is wrong. The teacher should not jump to a snap conclusion from the first symptom. Such a procedure is usually fatal.

The second step is for the teacher to analyze clearly her own emotional reaction toward the situation. If she is in the least emotional about it, she is in no condition to solve the problem. An emotion on her part indicates that she is probably prejudiced in her estimate of some of the factors involved. The degree of emotional tension is generally a good index of her relative incompetence to deal with the situation at hand; the more emotional she is the less competent she is likely to be. This is particularly true if she feels pleased with one child and irritated with another. She may justify her feelings by contending that the behavior of one child is to be condemned and, by contrast, the behavior of the other is particularly laudable. She is merely complimenting herself on her good judgment and is not solving the problem by such a defense. In other words she must be able to approach the problem on as nearly an intellectual plane as possible. Her only enthusiasm should be that of having her attention drawn to a new puzzle — in the same manner that one would be intrigued by a new mechanical puzzle (if one enjoyed the solution of such puzzles). If the teacher is unable to view the whole situation with equanimity, she had better leave

the solution to some outsider who can. One of the prime advantages of consultation with a school counselor, or with some clinical psychologist, lies in the fact that these outsiders can more easily view the situation abstractly.

A word of encouragement to the teacher who finds herself making emotional responses to problem children might be inserted at this point. The teacher can use such incidents with advantage if she will make a persistent attempt to do so. Each time she becomes pleased or irritated by children in her room, she can utilize the incident to enable her to discover areas where she is unusually sensitive. These sensitive spots usually point to areas of possible maladjustment and, by thus locating them, she may enable herself to correct her own mental conflicts. Instead of running from such situations, they can become as valuable to her as consultation with a specialist. A great many teachers have used this procedure with marked success. Nor does a teacher need to be unbalanced to profit from such experiences. Indeed, children are often more conscious of the sensitivities of teachers than they are themselves and, because of this knowledge, find unique ways of flattering or teasing. Let the teacher use the teasing of children to enable her to understand herself and she will not find it necessary to reprimand them; their teasing will diminish; and she will have much more ability to guide the children to better adjustments. It is only when teasing strikes sensitive areas that it is at all effective.

Having eliminated emotional prejudices and having reached a position where the problem can be treated as an intellectual puzzle, the next step is to carry out the same procedure that is necessary in solving any intellectual problem.

The first stage in this procedure is to hunt for evidence which is relevant to the problem. Most of us make too hasty or too narrow a search for evidence. The teacher should take plenty of time. If she cannot go at the problem in a leisurely fashion, it is pretty good evidence that she has not mastered the preceding step of overcoming her emotional prejudices. A snap judgment may be right but it is more likely to be wrong. Let the teacher take plenty of time, but let all of that time be filled with active study and not with idleness. Let her make sure that nothing is done until she is fairly certain that she has a logical basis for action and she will avoid many mistakes.

Patience, zeal, calmness, and intelligence are not enough to solve personal problems in children, essential as are all of these qualities. The teacher must have some knowledge of defense mechanisms and must learn how to see behind them in order to ascertain their real significance. The child uses defense devices to deceive others as to his real motives and the actual meaning of his actions. Surely, the teacher cannot take such behavior at its face value. We all know that we cannot assume that all the guests who shake our hands and tell us that they enjoyed our party had an equally good time. We know that all who cry at a funeral are not equally depressed over the departure of the deceased. The child adopts a defense mechanism to give others the wrong clue and, for this reason, it is impossible to get a clear picture of the conflict in the child from a study of his defense mechanisms alone. They indicate that something is wrong, but the real nature of the trouble can best be discovered by studying other aspects of the child's behavior.

A good plan is to search for inconsistencies and contradictions in conduct. Never point these out to a child

because that is merely enabling him to weave a closer system of defense patterns. Do not blame him for his inconsistencies. They are the clever teacher's stock in trade. Hunt for them, treasure them, analyze them, and try to see where they point. After evidence has been gathered, the teacher may venture a hypothesis as to some of the causal factors but she should make such hypotheses very tentative and it is a safe plan never to stop with one, but to try to develop several alternative theories.

After this has been done the teacher should set out to find evidence to prove that her hypotheses are wrong and to endeavor to discover another to supplant those already formulated. Nothing is more inimical to clear thinking than the attempt to hunt for evidence to prove that the theory we have formulated is the correct one. The latter plan is the easier method and is the one we are likely to follow in spite of our attempts to do otherwise. It is this strong tendency to wish to believe our own hypotheses that makes it necessary for us to try to undermine it. If it stands up under all our attempts to dislodge it and if, in spite of our attempts to find disproving evidence, we continue to find corroborating evidence, we may then begin to have a little faith in its correctness. A good plan for the teacher to follow is to attempt to imagine that the solution she has formulated is the theory of some other person and that she has been assigned the task of proving that the other person is wrong. If, in spite of all her attempts to show this hypothetical rival that he is wrong, the teacher is forced to admit that he is right, she may proceed to the next step, which is to act upon the theory.

If the preceding steps have been followed carefully it is quite likely that a plan for substituting a new line of



behavior for the old will be apparent. When a parent or teacher complains that a child does some particular act and, at the same time, complains that she does not know what to do about it, the implication is that she does not know enough about the total situation. It is surprising how easily most children's problems can be handled once they are seen in adequate perspective. When the treatment is effective it is experimental evidence toward substantiating the truth of the theory which led to its use. When it fails the teacher may be sure that she, and not the child, is in the wrong.

In early life, conflicts are likely to be between impulses in the child and the restraints of his environment. His defense mechanisms are designed to enable him to gain his ends in spite of the restrictions imposed upon him by outsiders. For example, a child, having learned that his mother will permit him to stay home from school when he is ill, becomes ill in order to evade school attendance. As long as the child is conscious of the purpose of such behavior, the outcome depends upon the relative endurance of the child and his parents, or upon the relative skill of the combatants in conducting the battle.

In a straightforward open battle the child is very often victorious. In order to gain an advantage the parents transform the fight from an open contest to a mental conflict which must be fought within the child himself. Instead of permitting the contest to remain a battle of wits and endurance, they make a moral issue of it. They discover that they are incompetent to cope with the child in open contest so they teach him moral precepts and make him believe that if he does not obey them he is doing an injury to himself. They make these moral principles part of him and the battle becomes a contest between that

part of his personality which accepts the moral precepts and those impulses within himself which run counter to these moral principles, whereas it was previously a contest between his impulses and the restraints imposed from without. In this way the conflict becomes an internal battle and the use of defense mechanisms becomes a form of self-deceit. By this method adults divide the child's forces. Whereas he had previously been able to present a united front against them, they now have part of the child on their side and the impulses which adults do not like are opposed both by the outside and by internal pangs of conscience or the fear of such pangs.

If the child is to maintain personal harmony within himself he must do one of three things. He may decide to do as he pleases without regard for the moral precepts of his elders. In such a case he becomes delinquent in their eyes and his fight is entirely one with his social environment. The second possibility is for him to be guided solely by his moral principles and to repress entirely any impulses that run counter to them. This procedure is satisfactory only if the child can totally suppress any impulse which is inimical to the moral codes he has been taught. Usually this is impossible and the attempt to follow this second course leads to a definite conflict. The third possibility is to effect some sort of a compromise. If the child does this consciously, he is able to maintain his mental balance. In many cases the compromise is an unconscious one, hidden by unconscious defense devices which conceal from the child the essential cause of the conflict as well as the nature of the compromise which he has made.

Some children seem to have exceedingly strong impulses which defy restraint, some seem able to adopt moral

restrictions and to adhere to them with almost fanatical violence, some seem to be mentally disrupted by any incongruity between their impulses and their moral codes, some seem to be able to view with some serenity any mental issue that may arise and to effect some sort of compromise with relative ease, some can reach an adjustment only after the most elaborate forms of self-deceit, and some seem to drift along without taking any of the issues of life very seriously.

From a study of psychopathic patients it would seem that the child who can keep his conflicts out in the open and on an objective level has the best chance of reaching mental maturity and balance. Parents and teachers, too frequently, work against such wholesome development by making moral issues from conflicts that should be kept out of the moral realm. The child is told that he is bad if he spills his soup, if he lies in bed too late in the morning, if he stays up too late at night, if he tears his clothing, if he hits his brother, if he fails in his lessons, or if he neglects to brush his teeth. If we could refrain from making moral issues out of such trivial acts and reserve morality for the inhibition of acts which are socially intolerable, such as murder, vandalism, and the like, we would be able to develop more wholesome children and have fewer acts of misconduct and less need for unconscious defense mechanisms. It is a sad commentary on our intelligence when we make a moral issue out of such a trivial act as brushing of the teeth, merely because it is easier to control a child by making him believe that neglect to keep his promise to brush them is a sin, rather than by going to the trouble to motivate him properly.

A mother will be afraid that her boy will hurt himself should he climb a tree so she makes him promise her

faithfully that he will not climb. The only lesson he needs to be taught in connection with climbing is caution enough to avoid falling. Having promised his mother, he is violating a promise and is therefore immoral if he does climb. How foolish this is! If the same mother exacts promises from her boy that he will not swim, that he will not loiter on the way home from school, that he will never cross a street, and that he will refrain from similar acts, merely because of her fear that he might be hurt, we have a setting for a genuine subjective battle in the boy. The intelligent and lively boy will recognize that his mother is exacting these promises because of her fear and not for his good. Other children may not see through the trickery which the mother is using. Whether the child deceives her and swims and climbs trees without her knowledge, whether he adheres strictly to his promises and never does any of the forbidden things, whether he develops unconscious defense mechanisms in order to deceive himself into thinking that he never wanted to climb or swim, or whether he becomes openly defiant and tells her he is big enough to do some things for himself and that he is going to do them, will depend upon how successfully the mother has been able to make him take seriously the moral restraints she has imposed upon him. Mothers ask what they should do when their pleas of morality fail to function. The answer is that, in many instances, they should never have made a moral issue of the act in the first place. A parent or teacher has no right to make a mental conflict in a child merely because of her own emotional imbalance.

The teacher should recognize all these possibilities, not in order to point an accusing finger at the one who set the stage for the development of a conflict and the consequent

defense mechanisms, but in order to get a clearer perspective and thus to know what corrective measures to apply.

The aim of this analysis is to enable the teacher to bring every issue out in the open. Some issues should be moral issues but, in these cases, the teacher should go to some pains to make clear to the child why they are. The teacher should make all other conflicts clearly apparent; she should help the child to see the forces that are in opposition; she should help him to see the different possible courses he might take; and she should stop with being an intellectual guide instead of trying to force the child into any certain procedure. When the child sees clearly all the possibilities he is very likely, with a minimum of guidance, to take the course that is best for him. If he does not come to his own decision it will do little good to try to force him. The notion that we must keep a child in ignorance of the real nature of life's problems in order to keep him good has long since been exploded. The way to make a child moral, wholesome, and agreeable to live with, is to teach him to face all his issues frankly and to use defense mechanisms only that he may save others from the suffering that tactlessness on his part might cause.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Be on the lookout for signs of mental conflict in children. The child who is defending himself against the outside world is better adjusted than the one who is fighting with himself. The hidden struggles are the most bitter.

2. Take an intellectual attitude toward children's problems and they will confide their problems to you. When you become emotional they will detect it and will not trust you. If you cannot overcome your emotional prejudices refer the child to someone else, such as the school counselor.

3. Help the child to restore his conflicts to the objective level. Do not undermine his defense until you have supplied him with, and taught him to use, a better one. In cases of a real moral issue give him the rational basis for the moral restrictions.

4. Do not attempt to fight the child's battles for him. Help him to get a clear view of the different ways he may solve his problems and he will take the best one with little help or admonition.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Why is it better for the child to learn how to fight his battles rather than to study how to avoid issues?

2. What are the possible outcomes of a fight?

3. Define *defense mechanism*.

4. Outline the procedure for discovering the nature of a child's conflict.

5. How can a teacher benefit by studying her emotional reaction to maladjusted children?

6. What danger arises when a person tries to vindicate some theory that he has evolved?

7. Explain why conflicts on the moral level are more harmful than conflicts with the external world.

8. State some general principle which, if followed, would decrease the frequency of internal mental conflicts.

9. What are some of the attitudes a child may take toward the moral restrictions given him by his parents or teachers?

10. How should a conflict be treated where there is a genuine moral issue involved?

## CHAPTER VI

### DISTRACTION DEVICES

It is not very difficult to find a child who knows more about the practical application of the laws of attention than the psychologist who formulates these laws in abstract terms. Children use such knowledge in two different ways. They discover means for getting and keeping the attention of mothers, teachers, and other children and they learn how to distract the attention of others from elements in their behavior that they do not want to have observed.

The attempt to usurp all the attention of others is an indication of selfishness, which one would naturally expect from a very little child; but such selfishness should be outgrown as the child advances in years and, for this reason, when an older child or adult continually plays for the attention of others, it indicates that he has failed to make normal social progress.

The attempt to distract the attention of others in order to hide or to disguise some action may lead to more serious consequences than the more childish attempt to gain attention. These attempts to distract attention are begun in order to deceive others but may end in a very pronounced form of self-deceit, such as is found in memory losses and a splitting of the personality, when one part of the individual does not know what the other is doing.

The normal child should not demand attention unless and until he needs it. If he is hungry, in pain, or about to fail in some project, he will make a vigorous reaction to his

discomfiture and such activity on his part will act as a stimulus for the attention of any persons who happen to be near enough to perceive his behavior. By a repetition of such experiences, he soon learns what types of behavior to use to get the attention of various persons. Observe closely and you will see that a child does not use the same methods to get the attention of all persons. He suits his method to the individual at hand. If he must deal with strangers, he may try various actions until he learns the sensitive spots for that particular person. One spoiled little girl confided to us that the only way she could get the teacher to pay any attention to her was to do something to make her "bawl her out." She was used to all the attention at home and it was much more desirable to her to be scolded by the teacher than to be ignored. Other children will confess that the only time that they can get any attention from their mothers is when they are bad. They feel that it is better to pay the price of being punished for the coveted interest rather than to suffer the mental anguish that comes when others are indifferent to them.

The devices that children will use to gain attention are legion. One little girl will eat her lunch only when the teacher sits with her and has learned the device of vomiting in order to get what she wants. She insists that her mother take her to school and will vomit if the father attempts to take her. Should she not wish to stay at school she will vomit so as to be sent home or will vomit as her mother is about to leave her.

A little boy who is jealous of his sister will set fires and perform other acts in such a manner as to cast suspicion on his sister. In this way he is able to put her in a bad light and to get some attention and love for himself. He is



an adopted boy and, thinking that he is not as securely established as his sister, he takes this way to strengthen his position.

Another little boy is so anxious to get the attention and good will of his comrades that he permits them to get him into all sorts of scrapes. They will begin some lawless exploit and use him as a tool to do the dangerous and bad part. The fact that he sometimes gets caught and punished he regards only as the necessary payment for their friendship.

Pretended helplessness is always a good device for children to use to get the attention of parents and teacher. Elders derive such keen pleasure from exercising maternal care over helpless children that the child need not make any great effort to have adults waiting upon him. Some very bright children will pretend to be unable to learn and thus secure the tutoring of mother or teacher. In other instances the defect may be specialized. One little girl, when asked whether her mother read to her said, "Yes, when I am sick." What a temptation to present to a child to exaggerate illness so as to get attention! A number of children manifest a specific reading disability which is, in reality, a device to force some older person to read to them. The validity of this statement has been established in numerous cases where a reading difficulty disappeared when the mother stopped reading to the child.

While such tricks on the part of children may seem trivial, they become very serious when practiced over a long period of time. Instead of developing independence, children who depend upon the attention of elders become more helpless as the years pass; instead of becoming more skilled in various activities they become more and more inept, being forced to an exaggerated awkwardness so as to

reinforce their position and demonstrate their need for continued help. Should they, in later years, become aware of the true nature of their difficulty, they find a great gulf between their helplessness and the independence that they should have developed, a chasm too great for them to bridge. If they have means of support they become social parasites, if they are forced to provide for themselves they live a precarious existence or depend upon charity. They voice the need for paternalism in society and believe that the world owes them a living merely because they happen to be in it. The idea that they are dependent upon their own initiative is repugnant because they have such a small store of it.

Not only does the child learn how to attract attention to himself, but he also learns how to distract attention from himself or from some aspect of his conduct when it would be to his disadvantage to have it observed. Indeed, he is much more clever at this than most adults. To distract attention from one object there must be a counter attraction which is stronger. The child soon learns this law of attention and studies ways to apply it. He studies adults to discover what acts are likely to attract their attention and then uses these to distract attention from his other activities. If any teacher wishes to know what are her sensitive areas all she needs to do is to note the devices that children use with her to distract her attention. They can discover her weaknesses and play upon them much more easily than she can discover what they are doing.

Children who use adults in this fashion are usually not the docile, helpless type of children who depend upon attention to satisfy their babyishness. Rather, they become very aggressive, order others about, and often get

their way directly. When direct methods fail they fall back upon clever distraction devices to deceive others.

One bossy little girl has gained complete control over her mother. When opposed she professes to see a "Black Lady." Her mother becomes so excited when this happens that she will grant any request that the child may make. This mother is hypersensitive about hallucinations because she had a fear of them in herself. She never voiced this fear to the child directly but the child discovered it, in spite of her mother's attempts to conceal it, and made good use of her knowledge.

Bright children often find that when they do well their parents exploit them. Against such a possibility they protect themselves by pretending that they are unintelligent. We have had several children with I.Q.'s ranging from 125 to 165 whose parents and teachers insisted that they were dull or stupid. Whenever they did manifest a little brilliance, they were imposed upon; when they appeared dull, they were relieved of unpleasant tasks and their less intelligent siblings (apparently more alert) were given the hard work.

On the other hand, a person of low intelligence may use distractions to cover such deficiency. One little boy manifested an exaggerated affection for the examiner in the clinic where he was examined and would perform such antics as taking off his shoes (requesting the examiner to put them back on), breaking the point on his pencil, asking to be taken to the toilet repeatedly, asking for a drink of water, bumping his shin on the table leg and requesting that something be done about it, all in order to distract the examiner from the business of giving the tests.

A boy who hated music, but was forced to take piano lessons, succeeded in getting permission to give them

up by playing false notes, mixing up his timing, all the while pretending he was doing his best. His brother, who openly rebelled against practicing, was compelled to continue his lessons because he "showed promise." Pretended inability to learn proved to be more effective than honest protest.

These illustrations should make it clear that children learn to use distraction devices because their elders teach them to do it. They perform the acts that their elders will not tolerate under the protection of distraction devices much as the sleight-of-hand performer does his tricks while the audience attends to some other aspect of the performance.

If such deceptions were always directed against other persons and if the child was always conscious of what he was doing and of the reasons for his conduct, the results would not be so disastrous. Instead of being content with sleight-of-hand performances designed to deceive others, the child, after having practiced his deceptions upon others, may come to believe them himself. He distracts his own attention from the significance of his acts until he comes to deceive himself to an even greater extent than he deceives other persons.

One little girl escaped a recitation one day because she happened to get sick just as she was called upon. The teacher at once became very solicitous and excused her. The next time she began to recite she was scolded for not knowing her lesson. Again she became sick and the censorious attitude of the teacher immediately changed and gave way to sympathy. Thereafter the child learned to make herself vomit every time she was called upon to recite when she did not know her lessons. In time she decided that this was childish and gave up the practice.

At the age of thirty-five, when the childish tricks had long been forgotten, this woman unconsciously became very ill whenever she was given some unusual responsibility which she felt incompetent to meet. Her childish pattern of behavior came back and controlled her in adult crises.

This distraction mechanism may again be seen when a child does one immoral act to hide the tendency to perform one still more reprehensible. For example, one boy was warned against familiarity with girls by a mother who continually used the analogy of stealing to enforce her teaching. She stressed the fact that anyone who defied social conventions was virtually stealing. This boy conformed to his mother's admonitions but was caught stealing trivial objects for which he had no use. Stealing became the symbol for doing those things which his mother had told him were bad. Since the attention of everybody was taken up with the minor thefts and with devising punishments for them, he did not even suspect himself of having the impulse to do the things his mother had warned him not to do.

Again, a boy may distract attention from his cowardice by posing as a hero in activities which involve no physical threat. For example, a boy who is afraid to get into a real fight with other boys will become the bad boy in the schoolroom because he knows that the punishment that the teacher inflicts will be much less painful than any beating from the boys. The teacher thinks he is bad, treats him as though he were a savage tyrant, and he is able to take on the rôle of the "bad boy" which in his eyes and the opinion of at least some of his comrades makes him a real hero. The teacher is so absorbed in watching for evidences of badness that she cannot see

the underlying fear which motivates him. She cannot understand why he continues to act in a way which seems to invite harshness from her, not realizing that each reprimand from her is really a compliment, an acknowledgment of his manliness. This device may be used so unconsciously that even the boy is not aware of his cowardice but really believes himself to be a brave hero.

Sometimes such lawlessness carries outside the school-room. It is usually the cowardly boy who is found in such acts as the surreptitious breaking of windows, tearing down of fences, burning of old buildings, and damaging property in general. Give such a boy a genuine opportunity to gain recognition of one sort or another, and such depredations will usually stop. Punish and scold him for them, and you are merely adding fuel to the fire. Each reprimand is an acknowledgment of his toughness and places him in the rank of heroes.

A still more subtle distraction device may be seen where a child does certain acts, which adults classify as "good" acts, in order to hide some hidden motive. So much attention is required to do credit to the good behavior that teachers fail to see that such goodness or industry is a trick to divert attention from something else. Such goodness and industry may be general or it may be devoted to some specific field. One little boy was heard giving the following advice to another little boy: "You do your home work and know your lessons but you get poor grades because you play in school and tease the teacher. She cannot see you work and so gives you a poor mark. Don't bother doing any work at home but act as though you were working hard in school and she will think you are studying hard. It doesn't make any difference what kind of work you do when she can't see you. Pretend to

work in school and you'll get by." This is pretty canny advice for dealing with some teachers.

One little girl was called to our attention because she was an ardent student of history. She would be found reading history late at night when she should have been asleep. She would neglect all her other lessons in order to read books on history. Most persons praised her for this interest and she was held up by her teachers as a good example for the rest of the students. The only one who seemed to be annoyed by this specialization was her mother. After studying the situation carefully it was discovered that this interest in history was merely a device adopted unconsciously by the child to tease and embarrass her mother. The mother was very conscious of her lack of an adequate education, especially did her lack of knowledge of history trouble her. The child, having discovered this, had a subtle instrument for annoying her mother. She constantly engaged her mother in the discussion of historical subjects and dumfounded her with her superior knowledge. The specialization in history had become an unwholesome means of self-deception. It was a disguise for a dislike for her mother and was used as a means of making her mother uncomfortable and unhappy. Certainly this is not an adequate motive to depend upon for stimulation for a life work, and yet many teachers had encouraged her enthusiasm for history, thinking she was a budding genius.

In another instance a ten-year-old girl was called to our attention because of her interest in astronomy. Her father thought that she must have some special aptitude in this field and wanted a thorough study made to validate his belief. It was discovered that this girl had been so hard pressed by an exacting father that she developed a pro-

found sense of failure. By accident she discovered that by specializing in one field she could make an impression upon her father which more than compensated for her lack in her other school subjects.

To be sure, these children do not realize why they act as they do. They are driven to adopt these behavior patterns because they are thereby enabled to avoid the pain of being punished for some act which they regard as shameful, or to avoid the recognition of impulses which they have consciously repudiated, or to cover up some deficiency of which they would be ashamed were they to admit its existence. They are deceiving both others and themselves in order to avoid the suffering which knowledge of their real motives would entail.

If not checked in time such devices may lead to serious consequences for the child. He tends not only to disguise his real motives by the use of these distraction devices but he distorts other phases of his experience to fit in with his self-deception. In short, he is laying the foundation upon which it would be very easy to build a neurosis in later years. The time to correct such a situation is in the child's early years before much damage has been done.

What can the teacher do to minimize the use of distraction devices by children in her classes? Must she suspect that every child who is good is covering some badness? Must she think that every naughty act is a disguise for some sinister impulse? Must she be constantly on her guard against the child who wants her affection and attention and does unusual things to get it? By no means. On the contrary, if she recognizes the true significance of such behavior, if she is aware of the motives behind it, she will know how to treat her children with much more wisdom than if she is deceived by them.



The first step in the direction of helping the children is for the teacher to study her own weak spots. The children are constantly on the alert to see the sensitive points in the teacher and it is by using the knowledge of these that the child is able to use the distraction methods successfully. If a teacher is so susceptible to flattery that her children praise her to excess (a device which children call "apple polishing") the teacher knows that she must overcome her desire for such flattery if she is to prevent her children from using this device. The unusually clever child (and even a child with a low I.Q. may be socially clever) is the one who makes an intensive study of his teacher and, instead of using a device so universally recognized as flattery, adopts one to which his own teacher is particularly sensitive.

The second rule to follow is to study intensively any peculiar conduct, any excessive conduct, or any behavior which is inconsistent with the usual behavior of the individual child.

Instead of being concerned with modifying such behavior, the attempt should be made to find out why the child behaves as he does. The teacher should not be too ready to accept the apparent reason and should be particularly cautious about explanations which are too satisfying or which are based on elements which are particularly annoying. Remember that, if a child can arouse the emotions of the teacher by any sort of behavior, he thereby destroys some of her ability to study the situation with calmness. If the child does not want himself studied, there is no better way to avoid such study than to arouse the emotions of those concerned. It makes very little difference whether the emotion is a favorable one or an unfavorable one so long as it is violent enough to be effective.

As behavior becomes understood it becomes less likely to arouse intense feelings in us. It is the lack of understanding which makes the tension. Even if the reason for behavior is not apparent at once, it would be well for the teacher to keep in mind a simple rule. No conduct is peculiar when it is understood. It is only the misunderstood child who seems peculiar. However, we should not limit our concept of peculiarity to those acts on the part of the child that we dislike. Any activity which is out of the ordinary should stimulate the teacher to intense efforts to understand its significance. Once understood, efforts to change it will become apparent and the solution will seem relatively easy.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. The child will try on his present teacher the distraction devices he found effective with others — his mother, father, and previous teachers; but he will continue to use only the ones that are effective in the present instance.
2. Try to decide whether the child is trying to gain attention to himself or whether he is trying to distract attention from something in himself. Treatment must be different in each case.
3. Some distraction devices involve conduct which is, in and of itself, desirable. Do not be misled by an evaluation of the act itself. Discover the impulses behind it before acting.
4. If a distraction device is used to hide some unconscious mechanism, it is often possible to correct the conflict behind the mechanism without disclosing to the child your theory as to his difficulty. Such indirect treatment is better than elaborate discussions with the child, at least in many cases.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What are two important uses of distraction devices?
2. How does the child learn to use distraction devices?
3. Explain how a child may do a reprehensible act in order to gain favorable attention.

4. How do distraction devices foster the tendency to remain dependent and to discourage the growth of independence?
5. Explain how the child learns to distract attention from himself.
6. Show how a distraction device may be more effective than honest and overt fighting on the part of the child.
7. How can one act come to symbolize another act?
8. Why are "good" acts particularly effective as distractions?
9. What might happen to a child whose main ambition in life turned out to be a device to distract attention from a weakness?
10. What are two essential steps that the teacher must take before she is in a position to deal intelligently with distraction devices in children?

## CHAPTER VII

### MEMORY DISTORTIONS

Very early in our lives, we recognize that incidents grow dimmer and dimmer with the course of time. How satisfactory it would be if we could only remember with great vividness all the pleasurable things and forget all the unpleasant! So we try to make memory a highly selective process, making an active effort to reinforce the memories of pleasant experiences and an even more ardent effort to forget the unpleasant. It very often happens, however, that the most unpleasant things have made the strongest impressions, and so this active attempt to forget becomes very difficult.

There is a marked difference between this active forgetting and ordinary dimming of a retention pathway with disuse. Suppose, never having visited a large city, I make a long anticipated trip to one of the great municipalities. There will probably be such a large number of novel experiences that certain ones will stand forth more vividly than the others. After I return home and relate the incidents of the trip to my friends I will narrate only the outstanding incidents, and though I could recall many others should the occasion suggest them, they gradually grow dimmer and dimmer until, after a few years, very few things can be recalled definitely, compared with the wealth of memories that were present at first. This pictures the ordinary process of forgetting.

If, on the other hand, something extremely unpleasant occurred to me, the process will be quite different. We will

suppose that, as I was walking up the street and was gazing at the tall buildings, a group of street waifs yelled out, "O, Rube, when did you get in?" I got very angry and ran after the nearest one, slipped on a banana peel, fell into a gutter and rose all besmirched. In a great rage I returned to the hotel and changed my clothing, getting angrier all the while. My trip "was entirely ruined." I finally decided, however, that I would not let the incident spoil my trip; but, not wishing to admit that I was at fault, I took the alternative of trying to forget. Forgetting, however, was a hard job; the details were impressed only too vividly on my memory. Now, every time I see a tall building I am reminded of the event and angrily turn from the building in my endeavor to forget. I hate tall buildings. When I see a small boy I am again reminded of my unpleasant experience and, refusing to think about it, I turn angrily from the small boy. I pass a fruit stand and see some bananas which remind me of the peel that caused my slip, and in order to forget I rave to myself about people who throw banana peels on the sidewalk, saying they should be arrested. My raving diverts my mind for a time. So, in order to forget the unpleasant incident I express anger against innocent objects. Furthermore, when I narrate my experiences after my return home I will carefully avoid all reference to this particular incident. Although many things in my story will suggest it, I will immediately block myself against any reference to it. After a few years I will get quite proficient in keeping it from coming up into my consciousness, and to all intents and purposes it will be forgotten.

But the interesting part is that it will never be forgotten; the traces will still be deeply ingrained, and the only way I can forget is to keep out anything that has any reference

to the incident. Trifling acts on my part will show that the memory is still present. For instance, as a result of this experience I may go into a perfect frenzy of anger whenever I see a banana peel lying about. I do not admit to myself why I become angry, but discourse on the accidents that such carelessness might cause. What I say is true. The singular feature is that my emotional reaction is too excessive for the immediate cause. I am angry not because of this particular banana peel, but because of the one upon which I slipped. I do not admit this, but express my anger against the present one. I may further hate the sight of tall buildings and develop a perfect horror of looking up at them. "It is against all laws of nature to build so high. We were made to walk upon the ground, and we are only running to the same ruin that confronted the men who attempted to build the tower to heaven which caused our present diversity of speech," I rave. My friends listen with tolerance, not noticing my fervor; or, if they do, not understanding its cause, excuse it as a slight personal peculiarity.

Thus we repress unpleasant memories, but how much energy we expend doing it and in what unfortunate peculiarities it results!

Repressed memories certainly do influence conduct even though the individual may not be aware of such control. A tiny child may be taught to hate orange juice by having had it mixed with castor oil. In later years he may be unable to recall consciously the specific incidents of such learning but the sight of orange juice may arouse disgust nevertheless. A little boy was made ill by eating cheese. He forgot the incident but as a grown man he still hates cheese. A little girl was made unhappy by an incident in Sunday School and, although she has forgotten the event,

she discourses long and loudly on the bad pedagogical methods used in the Sunday Schools of the country. What she says may be true but the emotional fervor with which she speaks is determined by her own personal reaction which is the result of an unconscious memory of the unfortunate experience.

That such incidents leave their mark and influence our conduct in major matters has been demonstrated repeatedly. For example, an adolescent girl experienced for the first time, under peculiar circumstances, the thrill of having a boy tell her that she was beautiful. She was sitting on the porch of a summer hotel overlooking a beautiful lake on a moonlight night. This one experience established what psychologists call a conditioned reaction, so that moonlight on a placid lake became an adequate stimulus to arouse intense romantic feelings in her. Many years later she almost had an open rupture with her husband because he did not react to a moon-illuminated lake as she did. He was not the one who had shared her first experience and had no similar experience to condition him to the same romantic setting that seemed so vital to her. She did not know why she felt as she did about this kind of a setting but it was so much a part of her that she could not understand or tolerate its absence in another person.

Many of our adult tastes are built in this fashion. We do not recall how or when we learned them but they are very real components of our personality. If we recognize this fact, we must admit the importance of avoiding the repression of memories in our early years. If a certain man hates cheese he is not likely to be intolerant of others who like cheese if he remembers distinctly why he came to dislike it. If the girl with the romantic experience had been more honest with herself, she would have understood

why the moon and the lake meant so much to her and would not have been so intolerant of her husband. She tried to deceive herself into believing that the reason for her thrill on the night of her first romantic feeling was the moon and the lake, instead of recognizing that the real reaction on her part was to the young man who uttered the romantic sentiments to her.

Some of the illustrations we have given are trivial but they should make clear the manner in which we try to avoid a conscious adjustment of more serious problems. Why do people evade a frank adjustment of mental conflicts? The fundamental reason why an individual does not face the issue as it should be faced is shame, which is a tendency to avoid anything that will in any way degrade his ego. He does not want his personality to be lowered in the least; so he either forgets or distorts in such a manner as to keep his ego on top.

The severity of the mental conflict is not wholly in proportion to the vividness of the impression that we wish to forget but more especially in proportion to the chagrin we would feel should the memory get to the surface. The greater the shame caused by the recognition of a mental fact, the greater the tendency to keep it down. Our mental integrity is largely determined by our emotional attitude toward the undesirable ideas. An unimportant mental fact may cause a tremendous struggle if it is related to something that is exceedingly shameful.

On the other hand, some unpleasant concept which has an intense emotional effect upon us may not be shunned because we have learned to confront it frankly. For example, death is hateful, and we would absolutely shun the notion of it were it possible to do so. It is thrust before our vision so continually, however, and is so apparently



the unavoidable end of all of us, that we must recognize it. For this reason the fact that we must die is seldom the cause of a mental upset. The death of a friend may precipitate an undesirable mental condition, but this is due to the severing of a love bond and not to death as such. We all know we have to die and we have learned not to let the prospect cause any shame.

We are all subject to fear, and as much as we may be ashamed of it, we are forced to admit this, though we will not admit that we are wholly cowardly. We admit that we are not physically perfect; but, since we are not accountable for this, we hide our shame, and blame the defect upon our ancestors, upon parental care, or upon disease. Intellectual defect is more shameful to admit, and every effort is made to keep up an intellectual front. When it comes to the moral sphere, any admission of inferiority is ruin; we must maintain our moral ideals.

Now, if it is true that the extent of mental disturbance is determined by the degree to which we tend to hide ideas, and the extent to which this tendency manifests itself is in proportion to the shame we feel concerning certain groups of ideas, and if the group which furnishes us the most chagrin in the event of inferiority is the moral group, it can be seen that most mental conflicts take their rise in ideas related to the moral sphere.

High and inflexible moral standards are accentuating factors. In most spheres of life the norm or standard is determined by the central tendency of a group, and more individuals lie somewhere near this central tendency than near the extremes of the group. In the moral sphere this is not the case. We are not considered moral for the most part if we are as good as the average run of humanity. We have set up lofty standards based on the attainments

of a few exceptiona individuals, and this is the goal toward which we all strive. The man who *thinks* evil has already committed evil; the man who commits one sin might as well have committed thousands, for he is bad; we are either perfect or we are vile — such are the teachings that we receive, that set the goal toward which we strive. It may be justifiable to set high ideals provided too much guilt is not attached to a slight deviation from that lofty goal. It must be remembered that, even though fixing the goal very high may on the whole somewhat raise moral behavior, the higher the ideal that we establish the greater will be the deviation in a larger number of cases from that goal. To establish a very high ideal, and then make the punishment for infraction as great as would be inflicted for infringement of a lower standard, is to cause, therefore, a greater amount of punishment. We must have ideals; we must have chagrin when we fail to measure up to the goals we set for ourselves as a result of the teachings we have received; but if we are going to have adults who keep their mental balance, who are going to look at life squarely and have integrated lives even when they are not so perfect as they would like to be, we must remember that ideals and conduct must be mutually interactive and modifiable.

In most spheres of moral conduct the line of procedure is usually well-defined and the child is clearly taught what is permissible and what is not. Besides, he has a fairly clearly defined outline of the relative enormity of each type of misconduct. He may originally want to eat everything that he sees, but he is taught that when what he wants to eat belongs to somebody else this original reflex tendency has to be modified to include other steps; instead of *hunger* — *eat*, the procedure must be *hunger* — *work* — *money* —

*buy — eat.* The omission of any step is a crime and is punishable. Shame need only come when he has made some such omission. The same is true of other things. He has to die, but he is taught to safeguard his life by taking proper food and exercise, and to care for his health in other ways, so that death will come only as an inevitable sequence to a well-spent life. He is taught that to slight any of the safeguards of life is wrong — the worst of all the series being to take his own life. The whole moral lesson is placed clearly before the child; but the fact remains that, even after this is done, the individual may still be criminal in his neglect of himself — may even commit suicide. Moral teaching, therefore, in spite of its prevalence, does not insure moral living.

Though teaching does not insure morality, it does provide the possibility of a sane attitude toward life, the ability to triumph over mental conflicts. Lack of clear teaching is the cause of many mental troubles or of distorted attitudes toward life. We cannot emphasize this too strongly. Just as light is the best destroyer of death-dealing microorganisms, so is intellectual light — clear teaching — the best destroyer of mental conflicts. The teacher has it in her power to do much toward freeing our hospitals of future cases of psychogenetic disturbances. It is hopeless to expect the greater part of parents to become sufficiently skilled to do this — they cannot compare their children with other children without prejudice and hence cannot apply educational methods properly; and the physicians meet only the worst cases. The teacher, by applying the proper instruction at the right time, can do much to help destroy mental conflicts.

This brings us to the sphere where the child receives the least light; that realm where the light he does receive is

distorted so that he is all confused as to meanings and values; that realm which, experience shows, is the source from which springs most of the cases of mental disturbance — the realm of sex. We noted above that every child is taught that hunger is proper but that to gratify hunger he must go through preliminary steps — *work, money, buy, and eat*. Why cannot he be taught that sexual appetite is proper but that to gratify it he must go through certain steps — *sex hunger* (libido), *courtship, marriage, and gratification*? But he is not so taught. Teachers and parents teach him nothing; they exhibit the greatest horror if the child expresses a desire to learn. If they teach him anything it is likely to be that the whole subject is indecent, including any impulses of this nature that he may have. He learns secretly. Thus the very knowledge itself is an immoral thing to him. He gains the knowledge and is then ashamed that he knows. There are persons who in later years never lose the idea that the whole subject of sex is vile.

If one entertains an extreme view of this sort and then awakens to the fact that he has a sex life, how is he going to harmonize the two? This is a serious problem for a vast number of people; and it is remarkable, in view of the education we furnish, that so many young people make as good an adjustment as they do. Sane education would make the problem considerably simpler. The attempt to conceal and heap shame on the subject simply makes the whole matter unbearable in many cases.

In developing the personality of our students we should be broad-minded in our education on sexual matters. We should dispel the child's curiosity as it develops; take a wholesome attitude ourselves; and attempt to lead the child to a wholesome a view. We should not go beyond

the extent of the child's curiosity, and above all things never approach the subject with an air of extreme mystery or with bated breath. We should recognize that improper thinking in connection with sex matters may cause peculiarities of conduct. By correcting such thinking we may prevent the development of such peculiarities into a more serious maladjustment.

Life is a sacred thing and there is no excuse for a child's being ashamed of its propagation. An excellent method of leading children to a proper attitude toward sex has been adopted in one school. In the first grade a period is set apart each day for story-telling and these stories are largely taken up with what is happening in nature. The children are taught about the flowers, about the birds, their building of nests, their hatching of eggs, and their care of their young. The children showed a natural interest in the hatching of the eggs and in order to give them a wholesome attitude a hen was brought to school and permitted to incubate a setting of eggs in the room. The hatching took place just before Easter. The children watched the incubation with great interest. An egg was opened after a few days, the process of fertilization explained in simple terms, and the tiny beginnings of the embryo shown to them. Several days later the teacher offered to open another egg to see how the embryos were developing. The children objected, saying that then the little chick would be killed, and they did not want it to die.

This indicates how moral sense is developed by a candid explanation of natural laws. Thus may children be enabled to avoid the compulsion of false shame, which, as we have just shown, drives them to forgetting or distortion in compromise with reality.

## PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. When something unpleasant has occurred, teach the child to use it as a guide to prevent similar occurrences instead of urging him to forget it because it was unpleasant.

2. Every excessive emotional reaction is significant, especially when aroused by something ill calculated to cause it. Hunt for the real cause of such an emotion.

3. Answer frankly a child's questions about life. Do not evade, do not go into greater detail than is necessary, do not lie, and do not answer in a hushed voice. In other words, your answer should satisfy his curiosity, not stimulate it.

4. Send the child to nature to learn his lessons of life. Nothing is better calculated to instill a wholesome attitude.

## QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the selective nature of memory.
2. Distinguish active forgetting from ordinary forgetting.
3. Indicate the difference between a conscious and an unconscious compromise.
4. Explain what is meant by distortion.
5. How does shame affect the severity of mental conflict?
6. Of what things are we ashamed?
7. How do high moral standards affect distortion?
8. How can distortion be prevented?
9. Why does a hidden conflict lose its severity when brought to light?

## CHAPTER VIII

### DAYDREAMING

Reality is a hard master. How sweet life would be if we could taste only of the pleasurable elements! But when we try such a plan we soon discover that the unpleasant is a constant accompaniment of experiences which, when anticipated, looked to be wholly desirable. We taste some strawberry shortcake and think how delightful it would be to make a complete meal of this dainty, and to eat all of it that we desire. Such a meal however turns out to be lacking in satisfaction and brings discomfort and pain in its wake. Another person has something that we covet, but if we try to take it we find ourselves in jail and under a ban of social disapproval. Life is truly hard. We cannot have what we desire and, if by chance we get our fill of some coveted thing, we find that the result is disappointing.

When these disappointments occur we are inevitably led to make a comparison between what we anticipated and what reality gave us. We find invariably that the pleasure we imagine always excels the actual pleasure. There is always an element in reality to mar our full enjoyment; while, in looking forward to some happiness, we rarely see these unpleasant realities. This being the case, unadulterated pleasure comes in the period of anticipation, because in our imaginings we select only the pleasant factors for consideration. For this reason we are prone to emphasize and prolong the period of anticipation; in other words, we are strongly tempted to live in the world

of imagination rather than in reality. Christmas is a glorious occasion for the boy because for days he looks forward to its pleasures. The hunter's dinner is appetizing because he increases his anticipation with each step involved — hunting, capturing the game, and its preparation on the camp fire. One who has read and dreamed about the great sights of that great city often expresses disappointment that New York is not so large nor so magnificent as he imagined, and even Niagara Falls fails to measure up to his dreams. The consummated pleasure leaves disappointment in its train because the anticipation was too extreme. The newly made millionaire is chagrined that his money is not more of a source of pleasure than he finds it; the bride learns, often with bitter feelings, that sordid reality is linked up with marriage, when she pictured nothing but ecstasy.

The effects of these lessons may tend in one of two directions, and the individual may find his bearings at any point between two extremes. On the one hand he may decide, consciously or unconsciously, that since reality is so cruel and since the world has only disappointment, he will live in the land of dreams. There all is pleasure unmarred by false friends and rude disappointments, so why not dwell there? On the other hand, he may give up all anticipation of pleasure for the reason that he has always been disappointed, and live a crabbed, sordid existence which has no pleasurable elements in it. Such an individual cannot enjoy a sunshiny day because it is sure to be followed by rain. The normal individual strikes the mean between these two extremes; while he realizes that pain must come, he discounts it because, by contrast, the pleasure is so much the sweeter; and, when he has some pleasant experience, he is too sane to expect to live forever



in the seventh heaven. He enjoys life when he may, but is not unbalanced when the joy is supplanted by sorrow.

The temptation to substitute imagination for objectivity is strengthened when a child is taught ideals which are far beyond his reach. The reason usually given to support this practice, that of setting extremely high standards for a child, is that he is thereby stimulated to do his best. The real reason is more likely to be the selfish ambition of parents, or the blind zeal of teachers.

Parents may desire to have their children carry on from where they stop, feeling that they have done pretty well themselves and being unwilling to see the good work stop. Or they may not have been very fortunate and hope that their children may be brilliantly successful to compensate for their failures. The teacher may be so earnest in her zeal to be a good teacher that she places her apparent success above the welfare of the children in her care. Such ambitious motives make parents and teachers lose their perspective and sense of balance. The children are urged with almost fanatic zeal to strive for high goals.

The children may be bewildered by this urging, they may adopt ways to deceive their parents and teachers as to their real ability, or they may accept these lofty standards. In the latter event, they are susceptible to the temptation to substitute imagination for reality. Having accepted high standards of achievement for themselves, and being unable to work out the performance to suit the goal, they fall back upon their imaginations to make up for their failures.

In one instance, the death of an eight-year-old son provided the excuse for creating impossible standards for a six-year-old boy. Five years had elapsed since the tragedy when the surviving boy came to our attention.

He was accustomed to spend hours in daydreaming. When drawn into conversation he confessed that he felt a great call upon him to accomplish extraordinary things in this world. The spirit of his brother was with him urging him to fulfill his mission in life. He could not tell exactly what this mission was, but he was sure that a great future lay before him. Strangely enough, he could not be made to study, he was failing in school, and as soon as any difficult task confronted him, he went off into a sort of reverie. It was discovered that this situation was the result of the extreme grief manifested by the mother and father when their son died. Throughout the years they had talked continually of the promise he had shown, how he was sure to have been a great man, and usually they ended up these sentimental outpourings by admonishing their living son to take up where his brother had left off. He owed it to his dead brother, he was told continually, to do the work that he would have done. Scarcely a day went by without the deceased being mentioned. His birthday was celebrated with a solemn birthday party where all took vows to "carry on." The anniversary of the death was solemnized with even greater pomp. What boy could live up to any such demands! Retiring into his imagination was about the only avenue of escape open to him. These parents were intelligent and well-meaning but had been drawn into these unintelligent performances because of the exaggerated grief occasioned by the death of their favorite son.

A boy with not much physical stamina developed a daydreaming habit because his father entertained high hopes that his son would be an athlete. A girl with not too much physical beauty became a daydreamer because her mother was ambitious for her to become the belle of

the town. Any teacher can find numerous similar illustrations if she will study her pupils carefully.

It should not be inferred that impossibly high ideals lead inevitably to daydreaming. A child may make other adjustments when such rigid standards are imposed upon him. He may develop some of the distraction devices that were described in the preceding chapter; he may build elaborate lies to carry out a pretense of living up to the standards set for him; he may attempt to copy someone who represents the ideal for him and succeed in making himself ridiculous in the eyes of his comrades; or he may become stubborn and use all his wits to defy those who nag him.

In dealing with children who daydream, it is important to treat each case individually and attempt to find the specific reasons why they prefer daydreaming to the more wholesome forms of objective behavior. If this is not done, if the attempt is made to stop the daydreaming without knowing why it is practiced, the results will seldom be satisfactory. The child is likely either to continue in spite of attempts to break off the habit or to develop some type of behavior worse than daydreaming.

If daydreaming is properly studied, it becomes particularly valuable in enabling the teacher to ascertain the underlying conflict in a child. This is true because the daydream is so readily manifested by the child, because it often contains clues as to the underlying difficulty, and because it usually indicates the circumstances that please the child and so points the way to effective treatment. Therefore, instead of immediately attempting to stop daydreaming, it should be utilized for study. When the child makes an adequate adjustment, the daydreaming will

stop. It is a good barometer by means of which the teacher can get a fair indication of a child's mental health.

If the observer uses a little of his own imagination, he can often discern that the daydreaming child is expressing some wish in pretty obvious form. The wish may indicate an inferiority feeling as when, for example, he wishes to be bigger than he is, to be stronger than he is, to have more money to spend, or to be smarter. The wish may indicate that he lacks friends, as when he wishes that he had more friends, that boys and girls like him more, or that his mother and father love him more. The wish may likewise indicate that he hates people or that he loves them, that he is aggressive or that he is submissive, as when he wishes to be able to whip the other boys or that he might be more obedient to his parents.

One great obstacle in the way of understanding the significance of daydreams arises from the attempt to discern to what extent they are true or false. The verity is not so important as the emphasis that is given to the various elements of the daydream by the child. Even when a child recites a true story, something can be ascertained about the personality of the child by the emphasis he gives to the different parts of the story and by the emotional tensions aroused in him by parts of his narrative. This emotional undercurrent is the important thing to observe when a child narrates his daydream. The significant part is not the truth of his story but the reason for his telling it. What kind of a child is he who would have a daydream of the sort that he discloses? What sort of training would produce such a child? What steps should be taken to give him a more wholesome outlook on life if the daydream indicates that his present viewpoint is faulty? These are the questions to be answered.

For example, one little boy told the following incidents. He narrated a story about his father running away from home and getting as far as New York, but being forced to return home because his mother had taken all the money from his trouser's pockets. On another occasion he told a story about his father running as far as Italy, but being forced to come back because some robbers tried to shoot him and took all his money. He said that he gets five dollars a day for going to school, and that his little brother has to give him a dollar for every time he cries. He did not have a little brother. He told a story of being chased by a band of Indians on his way to school and elaborated upon this story by telling of a fight between some Italians (he being Italian) and Indians in which the Indians were completely worsted. Part of this at least was obviously fictitious but the important factor to consider was not how much was untrue. These narratives indicated very definitely that he was very conscious about the inferior social position of his family, that he preferred his mother to his father, and that he was very much preoccupied with thoughts of money. Working on these findings, this boy was given an opportunity to earn some money, was entered in a play group where he was enabled to gain some social recognition, and was given some encouragement in his studies by an understanding teacher. He soon found little need for weaving fantastic stories.

The imagination of another boy revealed that he lacked social recognition and believed the way to obtain it was by engaging in daredevil exploits. He told a tale of finding an old automobile, putting it on the railroad tracks where real trains were running, of being chased by trainmen and police until he and his gang took refuge in an old shack, of being surrounded by detectives with

guns, of making a "stink" bomb out of an electric light bulb and routing the pursuers, and finally getting away without the identity of any of the gang being discovered. This boy had been caught in some mischievous acts and was regarded by his teachers as a "tough boy." His imaginings showed definitely that he was not tough; he merely wished to be, in order to win the approval of the other boys. The need was not to teach him to stick to facts when he talked but to give him a better way to obtain social recognition. He was placed in a Boy Scout troop, was given opportunities to do real stunts, and his love for telling fantastic stories died with his readjustment.

One little girl, when given an opportunity by a clever student examiner, spent two whole hours acting out a series of imaginary episodes in which she was the heroine and was loudly praised by all who saw her. In reality she was a timid little girl who received no recognition, was intensely jealous of a favored younger brother, and thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to win attention in an imaginary situation. The need of this girl was apparent from this exhibition on her part. By way of treatment her parents and teachers made sure that she was given more recognition and she soon became engrossed in doing genuine tasks instead of playing the part of an imaginary heroine.

One girl revealed an excessive attachment for her father by imagining herself to be the sort of ideal creature she thought her father would like. Another girl would not accept the fact that her mother had died and went on living as though she were living, talking to her and about her just as she always had done. A boy, who had been so repressed that he had practically no freedom to do as he pleased, imagined himself exploring dungeons, hunting treasures, wearing iron suits in diving exploits, and roam-

ing to all the odd parts of the universe. The variations that daydreams take are exceedingly numerous but the wide variety and interest that these productions manifest should not tempt us to lose track of their true significance. They will tell us many things about a child if we learn the language and permit ourselves to read.

The dangerous aspect of daydreaming comes when it is employed definitely as an escape from reality. When such a process is started, a vicious circle results which has no ending. The individual fails to meet some actual situation adequately. Instead of admitting failure and attempting to strengthen the weak points so as to succeed better next time, he daydreams of what he might have done, and reaps great satisfaction from this imaginary victory, thus submerging the chagrin of actual defeat. This method provides no preparation for a similar situation, and the next contact with reality brings a second failure, which in turn is buried in another series of daydreams. This training makes the person feel very inferior and helpless in the face of actual situations, until he shuns all efforts toward success and lives more and more in the artificial world he has built up in his imagination.

A concrete case will show clearly how the daydream may pave the way to a manic-depressive psychosis. A young girl of sixteen was brought to the hospital with the story that she had tried to get some morphine. In her early adolescence she began to be much concerned with the ambition of being a movie actress. For a long period she thought, dreamed, studied, and talked of nothing but movie stars, their life, and what she would do when she became one. She dwelt upon this so much that she failed in the first year of her high-school course, although she was intelligent and had done good work until this period.

It developed that this girl had, from early childhood, been denied excitement — even normal activity — and affection. Her mother had made a good girl of her, according to the mother's ideas, and told with pride how the daughter would keep a dress clean for days and how she had always lived a sweet and beautiful life. Underneath, the girl was aching for excitement, and while she did not break forth, she filled herself with lurid imaginings of what sport it would be to be a bad girl. She read in the papers murky tales of narcotic dens, and began picturing herself as a dope-fiend with such detail that she actually felt herself to be a drug addict. She longed to find out whether she could get some morphine, and went to one of the drug stores which had been raided and obtained what she thought was "dope." However, she was afraid to take any of the pills, which later turned out to be milk sugar. At another time she took some chloroform to see what would happen. Her attempts at obtaining excitement in reality always fell short of her anticipations and so she always fell back upon the imaginary situations.

In addition to the repressing of all excitement, the mother had devoted little affection upon her, saying that she had never believed in "this hugging and kissing nonsense." This unsatisfactory state of affairs led to the patient's imagining experiences in which she obtained love. Usually this was in connection with some woman. She formed several homosexual attachments but usually found them unsatisfactory for one reason or another, and so would again fall back upon imaginary attachments.

The imaginings of this girl never took such deep root that they were actually accepted by her as reality. She tried to reap from them those pleasures the circumstances



of reality prevented her from actually obtaining; but she always realized the fictitious nature of these experiences. When she was led to see the cause of these phantasies and the futility of them, as far as gaining any real pleasure was concerned, she was enabled to give them up and to live a rational life.

Often the phantasies take a more firm root than day-dreams do and then the patient may become hallucinated — that is, accept these imaginations as fact. When a hallucinated person is found, it is not always possible to locate the mental processes which led to this condition, but in some cases the mechanism is so clear that we are enabled to see how one can get into this condition through a development from simple daydreaming.

An instance of this is that of a young girl who used to build imaginary pictures of what her future life would be like. She had visions of ideal love affairs, more or less platonic in nature but mixed slightly with eroticism. She would spend a large part of her evenings fitting herself out in fancy lingerie and parading before the other girls in the boarding school where she was a pupil to gain their plaudits. All the time that she was doing this she was imagining what her future husband would exclaim concerning her beauty in similar situations. Her ideal seemed to be some sort of imitation of a Turkish harem where she would give æsthetic dances before the man of her choice and receive his commendations and compliments upon her grace and beauty.

Sadly enough her dreams never came true. She married at the age of seventeen, found in a week that her husband was nothing like her ideal, and regretted her marriage. Nevertheless she did not separate from him for seven years. During all this time she described herself as having

felt like a dead person. She had, before her marriage, felt "like a bird in a tree"; then she felt as though someone had shot her and she had fallen to the ground and had been dead ever since.

About the time of her separation, her father had wrecked the family finances; and, in order to replenish the family exchequer, she arranged a cold-blooded marriage with a man twenty years her senior. She explained that this second husband agreed to marry her in order to help the family financially. She said that she never loved him and was never in sympathy with his manner of doing things. His temperament was of an extremely practical sort; she was fanciful and poetic. She liked to vary life's program, but he had fixed habits that could not be changed by a hairsbreadth. She said, for instance, that she could tell the day of the week by the tie he wore. He had one for each day and kept them carefully piled with the next day's tie always on top. She had no real satisfaction in her marital relations and everything he did irritated her. She wanted to be complimented upon her personal appearance, but when she "dolloed" herself up he did not even notice it.

From this unpleasant situation she escaped by reverting in phantasy to that happy state where all is joy and happiness. While in the hospital she actually lost connection with her surroundings and lived the life that she had always wanted to live. She was extremely playful in the way she had been when a girl. Clad in thin, airy clothes she delighted in dancing before the victrola. She felt as though she were "bubbling over." She would playfully watch her chance and run toward the men's ward, and would be led back laughing as though it were a great joke. All her activity was that of a playful girl of the early

teens. She did not care who was around or what they did. She was wholly absorbed in her own phantasies and, if she reacted to anyone or anything about her, it was as though they were early acquaintances (misidentifying people on the ward and calling them by other names) or situations in which she had lived at an early age. This state of isolation with her own psychic experiences was very marked and remained consistently uninterrupted for several weeks during the first part of her stay in the hospital.

Gradually she came to pay more attention to her environment. She would answer relevantly, but would presently take one off with her into her phantasies. She seemed to be actively hallucinated in the auditory and visual fields, but what really was happening was that she was interpreting all visual and auditory stimuli in terms of her phantasies. For instance, on one occasion she had the doctor look out the window in among the trees where she pointed out and described babies among the leaves and imaginary people in the street.

Her recovery was very rapid after it once set in, and with some help she gained insight into the mechanism of her trouble. She realized that she had taken this flight because of her unsatisfactory marital situation. She refused, however, to change the conditions as they existed because she had no real grounds. Her husband, she said, had been as good to her as he could be. All the trouble was because she was not of his temperament, and she had known that before she married him; so she felt that it was her place to make the best of a bad bargain and do as well as she could. With this attitude she went back home, and has been making an adequate adjustment ever since. Before leaving she said that probably she would

let her imagination play at times in order to make existence endurable, but that she thought she could keep it from carrying her as far as it had done. She said that when things became unbearable she probably would go back into another period of phantasy. She laughingly warned us to keep a bed ready for her.

The two cases given above represent an attempt to gain what reality had denied by imagining the realization of the forbidden thing. This is the direct wish-fulfilling phantasy and it takes multitudinous forms, depending upon the particular type of thing which the patient has failed to obtain. In mild forms, and if the individual recognizes what he is doing, such phantasies do no particular harm, and are probably indulged in more or less at certain times by all people.

In fact, the daydream, if properly used, may have a function in character development. Suppose that a boy attends a concert and hears a famous singer. He enjoys the music, he admires the singer himself, and notices that great applause and approbation are expressed by the audience. He begins to daydream, he sees himself, in the future, also a great musician receiving plaudits of vast audiences, and the picture becomes so real that he immediately gets considerable satisfaction from the contemplation and visual imaging of the future period when he will be a great singer. This satisfaction that he receives through imagining himself what he is not, leads normally to an ambition to reach, in actuality, what is pictured in the imagination. The daydream thus becomes a spur or incentive to go through the necessary preparation to bring the picture to reality. His interest in music is nothing but the emotional satisfaction which he experiences every time he contemplates his possible future;

Here we have a boy who imagines himself to be the equal of Caruso; he knows that in actuality he is not; and then takes the proper steps to become so. 'This attempt to adjust reality to the phantasy saves the day and keeps the boy normal. The harm comes when the boy fails to reach his goal, refuses to admit that he cannot reach quite so high a pinnacle as he wished, and then imagines himself already there. When imagination is a spur to activity it is a boon; when it is a substitute for reality it becomes a detriment.'

Dreams are absolutely essential for the achievement of great things. No one has ever accomplished any real thing without dreaming of doing it or some similar thing. Nevertheless the dream in such cases is constantly modified and revised by real experiences. It keeps one from taking things as a matter of course; it furnishes incentive for work. Success is finally achieved by a multitude of readjustments between the dream and reality. The one who constantly adjusts his ambition to reality, and, at the same time, tries to pull reality up to his ambition, finally achieves the feat of bringing the two nearer together. An ambition that is immutable is fatal.

'Hence, while it may seem cowardly to retire to the world of phantasy in order to gain an imaginary victory over the enemy which constantly besets one, it is in some ways better to have an imaginary victory than to suffer continual defeat.' One may look ahead and dream of the victories he is going to win and thus make up for a few temporary and present losses, he may look back over the victories he has won in order to compensate for present disappointments, or he may distort the present so as to make it look as though he were winning when he is actually losing; but any one of these methods is better than never

to experience the satisfaction of any kind of victory. When one has to exhaust every ounce of the strength that he possesses in struggle and yet continually loses, his case is hopeless. He is the human tragedy. For this reason those who have the training of children should see that they win some battles in the moral, intellectual, and physical spheres even if one has to distort reality in order to make the victory apparent. By all means have real victory if that is possible, but if it is not, then make some sort of victory possible, even if it has to be invented. Never permit a child to conduct a losing battle, retreating and losing ground every day. Utilize daydreaming.

But if one finds a child who is spending too much time daydreaming, it is well to realize what may eventually occur should the child go too far. It would not be well, even though the habit has its dangers, to tell the child bluntly to stop dreaming; nor would it do to paint too vividly the dangers that follow too persistent daydreaming. Remember that he has chosen this method in order to gain a victory over a situation which in reality defeated him. If you tell him that daydreaming is bad you cut off his only method of obtaining a victory, and he is defeated again. Find out what he is dreaming about, what it is that caused him to resort to daydreaming, learn what it is he wants to conquer, and then set about helping him to conquer in reality. When he makes a real victory he will turn from the daydreaming; if you take away his phantasies and furnish no objective victory you only drive him to some other method of compensating for defeat — and the new method he adopts may be worse than the daydreaming method. After the ordinary child has tasted a real victory, the victory that comes from a phantasy will pale and have no attraction for him. The

same principle holds here as in all education — if you want a child to stop doing something, furnish him with something better to do.)

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### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Use imagination to stimulate ambition but see that the imagined reward is not substituted for the real reward.

2. A child who daydreams excessively is not satisfied with reality. Find out what is back of the daydream and you will be able to help the child adjust.

3. Make reality so satisfactory that the child will not want to forsake it for phantasy; stimulate his imagination to such an extent that he will continually work forward toward a condition in reality better than the present.

4. Use the degree to which a child indulges in phantasy as a barometer to indicate his flight from reality. Be more concerned with dealing with the cause of his flight than with forcing him to be literal. When he is happy he will not want to indulge much in daydreaming.

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Why are anticipated pleasures keener than real pleasures?
2. What two attitudes may result from the comparison of anticipation with reality?
3. How may ambitious parents and teachers drive children into the world of daydreaming?
4. Why must each daydreamer be studied individually?
5. Give illustrations to show that daydreams usually express some wish.
6. Give some principles for overcoming simple forms of daydreaming.
7. What is the main difference between the simple daydreams of children and the radical flight from reality found in more extreme cases of mental maladjustment?
8. Show why a person who indulges in daydreams is likely to go to extremes in his attempts to face reality.
9. Describe how a daydream may develop into an hallucination.
10. How can the study of daydreams be used effectively by the teacher?

## CHAPTER IX

### FEARS

One day a boy ran to his mother, screaming in obvious terror, and begged her to save him from the hobgoblin which was under a box in the alley. Without any discussion or any demonstration of fear, she gathered up a broom and, brandishing it as a weapon, asked her son to lead her to the box. Having arrived at the seat of danger she took a position to hit the goblin, turned over the box, and proved to her son that there was nothing under it. Thus she disposed of the cause of the boy's fear. Then she explained calmly to him that the boys had been playing a prank upon him.

If all persons were as wise in their treatment of children as this mother, there would be very few unreasonable fears and we should have little occasion to discuss this subject in a book on unadjusted children. The principle which she demonstrated may be stated in very simple terms. The way to manage a fear situation is to enable the child to make a definite adjustment to the cause of the fear. It is futile to admonish a child to be brave, to attempt to talk him out of his fear, or to assure him that he has no reason to be afraid.

Were a man to be confronted by a wild lion, he would not seek aid to overcome his fear of the wild beast. He would either do something to protect himself from the animal or hunt someone to help him. All of his energies, and of those who might come to his assistance, would be directed toward the cause of the fear and not to the



emotions of the man. Adhering to this principle will make possible an easy adjustment to the ordinary situations that occur in the life of any child. Teach the child to adjust to the cause of his fears. Do not direct his attention to his own feelings; for they will take care of themselves when the stimulus to the fear has been adequately handled).

The application of this principle in an adequate manner necessitates familiarity with certain facts concerning emotional behavior. In the first place, it takes considerable time to make an adequate adjustment to a fear situation. Do not expect a fear to subside in too short a time. The reason for this will be clear when we survey the physiological reactions that take place in any fear situation. Emotional tensions are primarily the result of the contraction of certain smooth muscles of the body. A smooth muscle (largely located in the viscera) contracts and relaxes very slowly as compared with the muscles which are used to move the body framework. In addition, an emotional stimulus augments the activity of certain ductless (endocrine) glands which, through their hormones, provide additional muscular tension. These glands are, likewise, relatively slow in their operation. Consequently, although a person might make a violent reaction to a fear stimulus, that single reaction would not be of sufficient intensity or duration to provide an adequate release for all the increased tensions of the body. If the subject of a fear tries to refrain from all activity after the first violent jump, the restrained tensions will cause spasmodic movements, inco-ordinations, and discomforts for a considerable period of time. The attempt to inhibit any reaction when one is tense merely increases the tension. The conclusion from these facts seems to be that an adequate reaction to a fear stimulus must embrace activities that continue

for some time. The more freedom the individual has to react, the sooner will the tension be dissipated. The greater the restraint against freedom to respond, the longer will the fear tension continue.

Another complicating factor comes from the fact that fear situations may combine and produce a cumulative effect. One boy was reported for examination because he manifested great timidity in trivial situations. It was found that he slept with a brother who habitually had spells of screaming in his sleep. He had been told that he must pay no attention to these outbursts and, instead of complaining, he would try to sleep after having been awakened by one of them. As a result of repeated vain efforts to calm himself, he developed the habit of lying awake for long periods, trembling with fear, and the dread thus engendered carried over into his waking activities. The difficulty here, of course, lies in the fact that he could make no adequate reaction to the cause of his fear. Lying awake and trembling were certainly not satisfactory adjustments. A change in the sleeping conditions in this home remedied this boy's trouble, and a study of the brother made possible an adjustment of the cause of his night terrors.

If we make the assumption that fear is always unpleasant and that its victims always try to escape it, we are deceiving ourselves and hampering our ability to deal adequately with it. Children soon learn that fears may produce pleasurable thrills. Instead of trying to avoid fearful situations, they seek them out. Witness how they flock to mystery motion pictures and listen to ghost stories. The beginnings of this enjoyment of fear may be seen in the activity of a tiny child. He will push an object off the table and jump with fright when it crashes

to the floor. His mother will run to him, soothe him, and replace the object. Soon the child will set himself for another shock, sometimes closing his eyes and beginning to tremble in advance, and push the object to the floor again. He is learning to enjoy the experience of being frightened.

The pleasures inherent in fear experiences provide the first obstacle to the teacher who sets out to eliminate them. The children treasure these pleasures and will oppose the activities of the teacher who would deprive them of fear. At least some of the children want to be frightened. Other children, on the other hand, are more susceptible to fear and become panic-stricken while the more hardy ones are enjoying the experience.

These differences in susceptibility to fear give rise to the tendency on the part of some children to tease the others and to set the stage for frightening them the more. The fear of other children is thus added to the fear of objects. In such circumstances, the teacher makes a mistake if she deals directly with the fears which the other children inspire. What she needs to do is to effect a change in the social relationships between the fearful child and the group who delight in teasing him. After a social adjustment has been effected, attention may be directed toward building up the habit of courage in the fearful child by seeing to it that he makes some active adjustment to every situation which frightens him.

In many cases the expressed fear is a substitute for some other fear, some fear that the individual is concealing. In these cases the real cause must be dealt with instead of the fear that is expressed. If a horse is afraid of a train, the way to cure him of his fear is to get him accustomed to the sight and sound of a train, to teach him that his fears

are groundless and that the train will not cause him any injury. If a girl is afraid of a shadow, the way to get her over the fear is to get her accustomed to the presence and appearance of shadows and to demonstrate to her that the shadow will not injure her. If, on the other hand, the fear of the shadow stands for a fear of something else, one cannot eradicate the fear of the shadow by showing her the harmlessness of a shadow. The shadow is a substitute for something else, and the only way to eliminate the fear is to determine what the shadow stands for, and then to eliminate the fear of the thing that lies behind the shadow and is the real cause of the fear. If the shadow suggests to her a man who is following her with intent to assault her, she will readily admit the harmlessness of the shadow but she cannot admit the harmlessness of the thing that the shadow suggests. The thing to deal with in such a case is the fear of the strange man — thus will the unreal fear of the shadow disappear.

The greatest enemy that any individual has is himself; and one's self is the thing most to be feared. No one on the outside plays any such vile tricks upon us as we do upon ourselves. It does not take us long to learn this lesson; and we soon learn to fear our own impulses and desires. Ages ago it was recognized that if one mastered himself he had conquered the universe. This being the case, we have a perfect right to expect, when one is tormented with a peculiar fear, that back of this fear lies a fear of himself. He wants to live up to the heights that the ideals of his personality dictate, and this fear is a dread that in some particular he will not do this.

As much as he may outwardly try to blame any mistake upon evil companions or any other influence, he knows perfectly well that the real reason why an individual makes a

mistake is because he wants to do so. A man may get drunk and blame it upon his friends; but if he did not want to drink, he would not do so, no matter how much they teased him. The inner desire reinforced by their temptations was too much. He might refrain if he kept away from their temptations even if he does have the desire; but he knows full well that, if he had no desire, their temptations would not be enough to make him drink. The desire, furthermore, is a constant companion while the outside temptations are spasmodic; for this reason the desire forms the most potent source of difficulty. If, then, a child has a fear of some particular thing, which cannot be abated by the ordinary methods that we use to eliminate fear of a harmless thing, the thing to do is to hunt for the thing that this fear stands for; and usually, the place we will find this is in the hidden impulses of an undesirable sort that the child is trying to repress and control.

A boy of seven years, without much persuasion, began to tell in a rather boastful manner about his fears of kidnapers after dark, haunted houses, skeletons in closets, ghosts in the chimney, and skulls peeping into his windows at night. He told how he would wake in the night and how his mother would be forced to come and sit with him until he went to sleep again. His recital was made with such glee that it was fairly apparent that these fears were a defense, a disguise to hide something else. It developed that he was extremely jealous of his younger sister who received most of his mother's attention. He had tried all sorts of schemes to get some of her interest but nothing was very effective until he hit on the plan of being afraid. No matter how attentive his mother was to his sister, he could always pull her away by having a

spell of fear. By emphasizing these fears this boy was enabled to hide from himself and from his parents the true state of affairs. He was punished when he became jealous and showed it openly. He was treated with solicitous care when he was afraid. Fear accomplished his purpose and at the same time protected him from disclosing that he was jealous.

A still more complex disguise appeared in the case of a girl of nine who began her history of fear by a night terror. She awoke bathed in a cold sweat, trembling from head to foot and screaming for her mother. After a short interval her mother was able to calm her and she returned to sleep. Following this episode, for a period of three weeks, this girl had a night terror every night. At the same time she was afraid to be left in the home after dark with anyone but her mother or father. Disgusted with the slavery which this imposed upon them, the parents took her to specialists who scolded her and told her that she should be brave enough to stay in the home with some relative or at least a nurse girl, that it was unkind to her parents to make them stay with her every night. She would cry in sorrow during these speeches and promise to try to overcome her fear. Thereupon they would go out, giving her a telephone number to call in case she could not stand their absence. Invariably she called and they were forced to return home at once. On the surface, this appeared to be spiteful behavior but no reason could be discovered for any such attitude toward her parents.

By indirect means it was learned that the first episode followed an evening when her parents had been away until quite late, during which time she was in the care of a young girl who spent the time reciting salacious stories. These so excited the girl that she was unable to sleep for a

long time and, when she did finally sleep, it was with a feeling of excitement that she did not understand herself. The night terror was a fear of her own response to the stories she had heard. She did not tell her mother the real reason. In fact, she did not understand the reason clearly herself.

Disguised fears may be corrected with relative ease if they are interpreted rationally and if attention is centered on the underlying cause which the overt fear symbolizes. If they are not corrected they take deeper root, disguise themselves more thoroughly, and lead to much queer behavior.

Perhaps a simple illustration will make clear the manner in which the more profound disguises are developed. Suppose, as I crossed a busy thoroughfare, I was almost run down by an automobile. I should naturally be frightened. In time I should partially recover; but suppose that the next time I attempted to cross I was again terribly frightened by a narrow escape from injury. If this were repeated several times, I should very likely develop a great fear of automobiles or of crossing the street. Suppose that, as a result of these experiences, I was standing on the sidewalk trembling with fear and that someone asked me why I was frightened. I would tell him I was afraid of crossing the street and would probably tell him why I was afraid. This is a perfectly natural fear reaction, and if I ever wanted to overcome my fear I should know just exactly what I had to fight — a fear of being run down by automobiles — and why I had the fear. On the other hand, suppose I had been taught that automobiles were vile; that people did not mention them in polite society; that attempting to cross a street when an auto was in sight was even more vile; and that to be

run down by an auto or to be threatened by one was the height of vulgarity. In such a condition, I should not dare tell anyone why I was frightened. To divulge the nature of my fear would be to ruin my reputation. Still the fear would be real, I would have been frightened and I should not be able to avoid showing my fear. Suppose, to repeat, a friend came along, saw my plight, and considerately asked me the cause of my fear. I should not dare tell him. Nor could I tell him I was not afraid; so I should attach the emotion to some other object — the nearest thing at hand. Often this thing is most absurd, and I am likely to answer that I am afraid of the curbstone, or of an adjacent tree. Such a fear is unreasonable but it is assumed as a natural defense against the divulging of a reasonable fear.

This process is known as emotional displacement. We may pass judgment on one who makes an unreasonable statement, saying that his rational processes are not functioning properly; but this indictment is unjust and does not get to the point. He invents this silly answer because he has a real fear that he cannot divulge.

As a case in point, a certain patient was brought into a hospital because she had a fear of killing her child. She hid all the knives in her house so that she would not carry out the suggestion, but a voice seemed to whisper to her that the rolling pin would do just as well. She would hide that, but it would then be suggested that she could easily knock the child's brains out with a chair, etc. So tormented was she with this fear that she had to be brought to the hospital for care. Yet at the same time she insisted that the fear was foolish. She had no desire to kill the child; she loved him dearly; she loved him so foolishly that she had spoiled him by gratifying his every whim.



She argued with herself that she could not injure a fly — she was so kindhearted — and yet the fear persisted. Her logic was no match for it. Such a fear might not stand for the same underlying fear in every individual in whom it occurs, but one thing is certain: if the obvious fear is silly, it must stand for some real fear which confronts the person. One is not genuinely afraid of nothing, and if the thing which appears as the outward object of fear is absurd or ridiculous, and especially if it offers a contradiction to the patient himself, it must stand for some underlying thing which the individual is ashamed to admit even to himself.

Before the birth of the child this woman had been worried by the prospect of motherhood. Motherhood would mean to her financial embarrassment, the loss of valued pleasures, and an increased burden of home duties. As a result of these unpleasant thoughts concerning the future, the temptation came to her to produce an abortion. The thought of such an act was so horrible to her that she drove it from her mind and was filled with horror that such a thought should ever have occurred to her. Her very fear of the idea fixed it more firmly and she was filled with terror lest it should return and gain possession of her. The sight of her baby and its appeal to her mother love only served to place the earlier temptation in a still more terrible light. What if she had yielded! Then she would not have her darling! She did not dare to admit to herself that she ever had had such a temptation. Nevertheless the emotional reaction to the temptation was there and expressed itself as a fear that she might kill the child.

Now it often happens that when, in trying to get at the bottom of such a case, one unravels the story of a patient's life, he finds that the real basis for a fear, or other mental disturbance, is in some trivial thing which happened in the

infancy or early youth of the patient; that, because of ignorance and the silly attitude that the patient took toward the elements of the conflict at that time, the conflict assumed tremendous proportions; and that, when the thing is brought to the surface, the patient wonders why he or she could have been so disturbed about a thing of so little importance. In other words, a conflict which originated because of a child's lack of information, and which was suppressed into unconsciousness in an attempt to forget because of false shame connected with the subject, has caused the person to become unbalanced and finally to break down under the weight of a load which has assumed unwarranted proportions.

In order to show the way that hidden fears intertwine with the rest of one's conduct, let us consider the case of an adult in whom fear manifested itself in a number of absurd reactions.

A young professional man, unmarried, began to suffer from self-reproaches which came on rather suddenly after a disappointment in love. The reproaches concerned themselves with most trivial matters, as a rule, sometimes one thing, sometimes another, yet he was reproaching himself about something practically all the time, and in a seemingly exaggerated manner. Thus one day he went into a store to buy a straw hat. He selected one that suited his fancy, put it on and left the store. Hardly was he outside the door when the thought came upon him, "You ought not to have bought that hat." Absurd as it may seem, the sense of having done wrong which he experienced was of very great intensity. He continued on his way, arguing with himself to the effect that his feeling was absurd, that he had done nothing wrong, yet all the while the sense of self-reproach remained. Finally, his distress was so great that he turned and began to retrace his steps toward the store, intending to exchange the hat for another one. On the way back he was assailed with new

doubts, for he kept thinking: "Maybe it would be better if I kept this hat. Maybe I am making a mistake if I take it back." By the time he had reached the store, he had decided that it would be better to keep the hat, so he started for home again with his purchase still on his head. Before he had gone very far, the first sense of guilt had again assailed him and finally he did return to the store and, exchanging the hat for another one, felt considerably, if not entirely, relieved. He went through a similar performance on another occasion when he had gone to his bank to get a new check book. No sooner had he received the book than he felt he ought not to have it, that he must take it back, that he was doing a great wrong in delaying an instant. On still another occasion, a friend suggested to him that he ought to join a certain regiment. Without thinking of the matter at all seriously, he replied: "Well, perhaps I will join before long." Soon after leaving his friend the idea suddenly seized him: "You ought never to have said that. You shouldn't join the regiment." And he could get no rest until he had gotten into communication with his friend and taken back his words. Having done so, however, he still felt dissatisfied, and kept thinking: "Maybe it would be better if I did join. Maybe I should not have said I wouldn't, etc." A day or two later, having berated himself continually in the meantime, he called up his friend and told him he had decided to join after all, and then immediately the first set of reproaches returned, so that still later he had to retract this declaration, etc.

This man's peculiar symptoms are by no means inexplicable, if we take into account certain elements of his mental life that were not clearly before his consciousness. He had, as was said, been disappointed in love. The situation and circumstances of the disappointment were such as to give rise to a considerable degree of resentment on his part toward not only the young lady herself, but toward his family, his father in particular. The hostility to his father was really a revival of earlier hostilities dating from his childhood, which related to interference and punishment but which, for the most part, were quite fully repressed and withheld from consciousness.

The symptoms really express a cruel trend which this young

man possessed, and viewed in this light they appear relatively simple. The straw hat which he selected in the store had, at the back of the sweat band inside the crown, a tiny bow of red ribbon. This fact he perceived as he examined the hat, without its really arresting his conscious attention. But the important thing was that the tiny red bow looked, as he glanced at it, not unlike a small splotch of blood. Thus, for him to wear that hat was, in a way, *to have blood upon his head*. This was the reason he reproached himself. For if he had put into action the hostile impulses he was repressing, he would in fact have had blood upon his head; he would have murdered someone.

The incident of the check book depends upon a similar association of ideas. The one he first received at the bank had a bright red cover, thus suggesting blood, and to keep it suggested *having blood upon his hands*. When he had taken it back and exchanged it for a yellow one, he felt considerably relieved.

In the same way the idea of joining the regiment had become connected with the repressed murderous trend, for there had passed through his mind the thought: "Suppose I join the regiment and there is a strike or a riot, for which the militia are called out. *Then I might kill someone.*"

His compulsive vacillation is thus seen to have had its origin in two opposed and displaced trends. The one which led him to reproach himself for having purchased the hat, received the check book, and promised to join the regiment was derived from his conscious, ethical, social, and affectionate self. The other consisted of primitive, savage, asocial impulses, inhibited very naturally from direct expression, but nevertheless not kept entirely subdued by repression.

As a very small boy this patient was very unruly, jealous, and subject to the most violent fits of anger and rage. He had also shown at times a certain tendency to be cruel to other children and to animals. His brother, of whom he was jealous at times, he had often wished dead, and on one occasion in a fit of anger nearly killed him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Frink, H. W., *Morbid Fears and Compulsions*, 286-290; Moffat, Yard & Co., 1918.

These early tendencies he had tried to overcome by emphasizing characteristics of an entirely different nature; outwardly he had succeeded. He was quite exceptionally moral in his ordinary behavior. He was a most dutiful son, devoted to his parents in a very marked degree. He was to all appearances good-tempered, conscientious to a fault, and inclined more to gentleness and submissiveness than to aggression and pugnacity.

By a conscious effort he had thus successfully restrained the childish impulses to violence until he met with the disappointment in his love affair. This brought back the tendencies to cruelty and gave rise to the symptoms that we have given above. These fears and the consequent debates that arose in his mind over them were therefore a confession that he had failed to repress and become master of the tendency to cruelty. He had not failed absolutely because he still maintained his moral behavior; but he had failed in his desire to escape the wish to kill. He knew that he would not kill his brother, father, or sweetheart, and it was not this that he was fighting. He was horrified that he should have the least desire to do such a thing; the desire was the thing he was fighting and the fear that he manifested was a confession that he had failed to conquer it. Just as truly, when a child trembles at loud thunder he is confessing that this terrible noise is something over which he has no power; all he can do is to sit and tremble and take any consequences that may happen to him from this unavoidable situation.

The task of the teacher, when she meets fears of this sort, is to discover what is the real cause of each fear. If the cause that the child gives is the real cause, the fear will yield to relatively simple correction methods. If the fear persists in spite of all efforts to the contrary, and if in

addition the object feared is inadequate as a cause, then the teacher should not accept the story of the child, but try to find what is back of it. Nor should the teacher try to reason in her own mind to the real cause. The same expressed fear, such as a fear of shadows, might stand for any number of things. The only way to discover the latent background is to learn what the manifest fear is related to in the mind of the child. The child alone can give you this information and you must get the child into an attitude where he will tell you all that is related to the manifest object of the fear before you can hope to get it. If the child can reach the point where he will talk freely about this manifest fear-object, he will soon be able to see the latent fear that he has been covering.)

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### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. When a child expresses a fear he does not want sympathy from the teacher, he wants deliverance from the cause of the fear.
2. If the fear seems foolish it does no good to tell the child so. He already knows it. Help him find the latent cause of the fear and the thing will not then appear foolish. Remember, there are no really foolish fears.
3. Do not try to point out the specific background of a fear from your own deductions or from analogy with any other case. If you dig out the real fear the child will recognize it and the fear will disappear. As long as the fear persists you may know that you have not discovered the cause.
4. You cannot dispel an abnormal fear by reason. It is a waste of time to try. Teach children to make active adjustments to the cause of each fear.

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What is the essential guiding principle for dealing with a fear situation?
2. Explain why emotions persist.

3. Explain the significance of the fact that fears from different situations may have a cumulative influence.
4. Why must teachers take into consideration the fact that some children learn to enjoy being frightened?
5. How should a situation be handled where fearless children delight in tormenting the fearful ones?
6. Explain the mechanism of disguising and concealing fears.
7. Show how jealousy may be hidden behind a manifestation of fear.
8. Explain how a night terror might be the portrayal of a hidden fear of an undesirable sort.
9. What is the best indication that a fear is a defense mechanism used to disguise a mental conflict?
10. What should the teacher do if a pupil asks for help to overcome a fear?

## CHAPTER X

### FEELINGS OF INSECURITY

The cringing, anxious, trembling, fearful individual is certainly an object of pity. His apparent distress is excessive, it far exceeds any genuine reason for fear, and leads him to do many exceedingly queer acts. He is usually abused. He is teased, shunned, or hated according to the effect that his conduct may have on the particular person he is contacting. If the observer is lonely himself, he is likely to pity those who feel insecure. If he is one who has partially conquered his own weaknesses, he will be intolerant of the apparent fearfulness of others. If he is one who lacks insight into himself, he is very likely to hide the significance of anxiety and worry in others by the use of ridicule or the perpetration of practical jokes upon those whom he despises because they represent a caricature of his own unconscious fears. All these varieties of treatment accentuate the poor victim's feeling of insecurity.

Genuine dangers will make the strongest man feel insecure, at least for the moment, and since all persons confront dangers of one sort or another, all persons have felt insecure at times. These transient experiences should never lead to the habit of feeling insecure. The owner of such a habit usually justifies himself by asserting that he has met unusual difficulties or has been surrounded by particularly hostile persons. The real reason is not to be found in the nature of the difficulties he has met, but in the fact that he has learned to fail whenever confronted by a difficulty, instead of having learned to overcome



obstacles as they arose. The person who has learned this habit of surrender gives up to the slightest threat without a fight; indeed, he is continually defeated whether there is any threat or not.

The habit of defeat may appear in different forms, depending in part upon other characteristics of the individual. The introvertive type of person learns to become insensitive to a challenge and callous to the chagrin of defeat. He learns to be defeated before he starts and, in addition, to be indifferent to the entire significance of life's conflicts. The extrovertive person fights vigorously, even though the odds may appear to be against him, and gives up in defeat only when he is completely worsted. His defeat is likely to be of a temporary nature and, after a period of depression, he will fight again with unimpaired vigor. These alternations of success and failure may contribute to the development of the manic-depressive type of personality, so called because the individual oscillates between periods of mania (excitement) and depression. Contrasted to both of these is the one who shows his defeat by worrying. He maintains his sensitivity to his environment, he may even become more sensitive as time goes by. At the same time, he grows less and less confident of his ability to meet the ordinary difficulties of life. He cannot grow indifferent to his failures and he cannot win; he can only fret and exhibit to all who observe him his continual turmoil. Furthermore, each failure demonstrates to him the need for support from others and makes him keenly aware of the fact that such support is lacking. The introvert cultivates himself and learns to do without success so long as he can have his own thoughts. The manic-depressive person learns to fight more strenuously with each defeat. The anxious person learns to become

more and more dependent upon others. Anxiety and worry come when the accustomed support of a child is too precipitously withdrawn. Anything which makes the child feel that some trusted person has gone back on him will accentuate anxiety and worry.

An illustration may make clear how the feeling of insecurity may grow and how it may initiate peculiar conduct. An eleven-year-old boy was reported by his teacher because he did aggravating little things to cause discomfort to others. He purposely annoyed his teachers by whispering, pushing other children, and by laughing loudly and discourteously. He was unkind to other children, throwing dirt on the clean clothing of little girls, and playing mean practical jokes on the boys. On one occasion he pushed a little girl down, broke her glasses, and scratched her face; all with no apparent reason except that the girl was particularly attractive and well-dressed. All the children disliked him and he was in a continual series of quarrels with them. His parents reported that he was dishonest.

In casual conversation, this boy expressed as keen a dislike for the other children as they manifested for him. He tried to give the impression that he was a thoroughly callous individual who was perfectly capable of taking his own part in a particularly hostile world.

Under the surface he was quite different. He wanted friends to an extreme degree and was exquisitely sensitive to the reproaches of his parents and teacher and to the hostility of the other children. He did not know how to change their attitude and all he could do was to fight back. The reason for his feeling of isolation was easily discovered. He had been adopted, at the age of six, by parents who were extremely kindhearted but who were meticulous in

their conduct and exacting in their demands upon him. They became so discouraged because they could not make him live up to their standards that, after a long period of threatening, they returned him to the home from which they had adopted him. Repenting this action after a time, they had a long talk with him, impressing him with the importance of repaying them for their kindness to him by living up to their standards, and agreed to take him back on probation. Instead of improving he became worse. The boys teased him about being an orphan, the teacher tried to shame him into good behavior, and the probation officer tried to make him behave by threatening him. All these methods were useless because they served only to convince him more strongly that everybody disliked him. The only way he could win any affection or recognition was by good behavior and that seemed beyond him. His misconduct, his apparent hatred for others, and his teasing and cruelty were merely manifest symptoms of his underlying hunger for affection and recognition from others. The casual observer may agree with this hypothesis but add that no one can love a boy who is so vicious and unkind, that one can love only a lovable person, and if a child wants love he must be considerate of others.

We may answer this objection by stating the situation in other words. The boy wanted love and when he did not get it he retaliated by hating and punishing those who denied him. They retaliated, because they believed his hate was genuine, and he thus seemed vindicated in his view that they disliked him and therefore proceeded to do more unkind things. So the sequence of hateful acts continued on both sides, each believing that the other was to blame. The parents and teachers, of course, demanded that the boy change his behavior before they would change

theirs. Such a demand is too much for any boy; the adults should be the ones to break the chain of circumstances. In this particular instance, the mother was induced to give the boy her affection regardless of what he did. After she had convinced him that she loved him and would stand by him whether he was good or bad, he began to change. When the teacher was induced to change her attitude and after she had convinced the boy that she was more interested in him as a person than in punishing him, that she liked him regardless of what he did, he soon dropped his misbehavior entirely. Where this boy would have gone in the way of delinquency had these changes not been effected can only be imagined, but it does not take any great stretch of imagination to picture a possible life of lawlessness. Why could not the lawlessness of at least some hardened criminals have begun in feelings of inadequacy and insecurity growing from a lack of recognition and affection by parents or teachers?

At each stage in life every person has some need for a sense of security. This need is supplied by different circumstances at different stages in life and individuals differ widely in their needs. One person demands love, another a piece of land, another a bank account, another motor skill, while still another derives a sense of stability from having a good education. Furthermore, the possession of all the requirements for a sense of security, even if we knew what they all were, would be no guarantee that the owner would feel secure. There are chronic worriers who have no reason for worry as far as external appearances are concerned. They have learned the habit of being anxious and the explanation of this attitude must be found in a study of the way in which it was learned. Perhaps a study of the normal stages in the development of the sense of security will

enable us to see more clearly the possible points where erroneous learning may occur.

The child is born helpless and requires the assistance of his elders in order that he may exist and may be relieved of discomforts. He learns to give certain signals of distress to which adults react and thus he obtains the help he needs. Should some accustomed agency of relief be removed, he is forced to hunt new sources of help. We may presume that his sense of loss in such a situation is somewhat contingent upon the degree of dependence he has learned to place in the accustomed means of support and upon the suddenness and completeness of removal. If the removal is very gradual and he has not learned to be too dependent upon it, he will merely be stimulated to hunt some new adjustment and will be urged on toward self-reliance by the experience. Normally it is better to have the child develop self-reliance first and voluntarily relinquish his dependence upon others rather than have his elders withdraw their help and force him to seek out some other sources of aid. It takes wise parents, nurses, and teachers to train children to be independent and then quietly withdraw their help. Many adults take such delight in being of assistance to helpless infants and young children that they unconsciously prolong the period of helplessness and thus pave the way for a deep sense of loss when the child is finally thrust upon his own resources.

One of the most potent causes for the development of the sense of insecurity is excessive parental attention during the very early years, and a continuation of such solicitous care during the period when the child should be learning independence and self-reliance. For such protected children, the break that occurs when they enter school is often too much for their endurance. They feel

as though their only support was being removed when the mother leaves them in a strange setting for a few hours and manifest their fear by crying, withdrawal from the other children, and refusal to enter into the activities of the class. This may be followed by complaints by the child to the mother, should the teacher fail to give the child the same undivided attention to which he is accustomed in the home.

The mother who does too much for a child is merely gratifying her own selfish desires and is not doing the child a favor; she is certainly paving the way for a shock when he is suddenly taken from her loving protection. If she is extremely lacking in insight, she may take the desire of the child to stay under her care, and his complaints about the teacher, as evidence that he is particularly delicate and that she must give him the protection he needs. If she does encourage such behavior she merely makes him more dependent and more fearful. Feelings of insecurity very often have their origin in the selfish impulse of mothers to keep their children dependent.

To be sure some physical factors may accentuate any tendency on the part of the mother to give her child too much help. Sickness or physical weakness may accentuate or prolong infantile helplessness but, instead of serving as an excuse for selfishly encouraging the child to remain helpless, such physical conditions should emphasize the need of more gradual but sure training in independent activities on the part of the child.

Unfortunate episodes may produce a feeling of insecurity in a child who, otherwise, would make normal progress in gaining independence. For example, a child was romping in the home of a relative when he suddenly stepped upon the foot of a large, sleeping dog. The dog, thus un-

expectedly hurt, jumped at the child, bit her and scratched her, and thoroughly frightened her. Had her mother not been present the dog might have done her very serious injury. What is more natural than for this child to cling to her mother after an event of this sort! It may take a great amount of careful training in self-reliance to overcome the effects of one such violent and frightful experience.

Fancied or real favoritism may cause a feeling of insecurity in the neglected child and lead to jealousy. A mother may favor a child because of sex preference, because the child is particularly beautiful or intelligent, because he resembles some favorite adult, or because he has been ill and has required an undue proportion of time and attention. The neglected child cannot be expected to give consideration to the reasons for parental favoritism or to evaluate a family situation with fairness. The effect upon him is just as real whether it is actual or imagined, whether it is justified or not, whether it indicates a real deficiency on his part or is the result of an accidental circumstance.

As an illustration of an unfortunate family situation causing a feeling of insecurity, we may cite the following case. A girl of seven was reported because she refused to stay in school. She had recently been transferred to the school she refused to attend because of a change in residence. After the first day she cried and would not go back. As a result of this her aunt, with whom she lived, was forced (so the aunt thought) to give the child private instruction in the home. This little girl was one of a large family whose parents had not the means to support all of them. She had spent a large part of her time with her aunt and had come to live permanently with this aunt and,

for this reason, had entered this new school. She talked freely about her home situation saying, "There are too many children in my family and so I live with my aunt." The fact that she was the one to be sent away would imply that she was the least acceptable one and that her only support was her aunt. Consequently, she overvalued her relationship with the aunt and clung to her with the utmost tenacity. Her fear of staying in school was merely a symptom of her feeling of insecurity and her desire to make herself dependent upon the aunt to such a degree that she could not possibly send her away as her family had done. Having analyzed this situation, the aunt set about to correct it. She first built up in the child an assurance that her place in her home was thoroughly assured and thus removed the necessity for the child to demand incessant attention in order to maintain an uncertain position. She then set about giving her opportunities to build up self-assurance with other children, and finally at school.

Sometimes a child loses faith in the person whom he has trusted and so feels as though his only support had failed him. Such a situation may exist when the father, whom the child idealized, has failed in business, has been caught in a criminal act, or has committed suicide. Nevertheless, it may be said that even such situations do not cause an excessive feeling of insecurity unless the magnitude of the failure is stressed or exaggerated by adults, or because they come as a sequel to a series of unfortunate preceding situations. One boy of nine was reported because he was unusually sensitive, had a speech defect, and was failing in his school work, although he had superior intelligence. It was found that he had been born with club feet and had been treated for them through a period of



years. He had finally overcome the trouble, with the help of several operations, and walked normally. He retained a keen sensitivity about his "small feet." He complained that he could not hear and used his speech defect as an excuse for not reciting. Upon this background of physical defect was superimposed the failure of a father who bitterly and openly reproached himself in the boy's hearing about his failure. This situation, of course, filled the boy with forebodings. If his father had failed, what chance had he, with his physical handicaps, to do any better?

The symptoms that indicate an underlying feeling of insecurity are exceedingly numerous and complex. We shall enumerate and describe some of them but the reader should be warned against the temptation to assume that we can reason our way back from a symptom to a specific cause. The symptom is merely an invitation to make a complete study of the child so that the specific factors may be disclosed and treated. Nor should the student be content with classifying a symptom and using an abstract term as an explanation. It is not enough to say that a child has an inferiority complex. In addition, it is necessary to discover the exact area of the inferiority feeling and to understand how it was learned. With such information at hand it is possible to institute a program of re-education with some hope of success.

The person with a sense of insecurity usually takes himself and the world too seriously. He may try to hide this attitude by an assumed carelessness and joviality, but the significance of such a mask should be easily apparent to a discriminating observer. This excessive seriousness may result from exposure to too high and too rigid ideals. It may result from hearing parents and other adults discussing the extreme difficulties of living either in the

moral or economic realm. It may come from contact with actual failure. Or it may result from living with some person who has an anxiety neurosis and who loudly complains and worries about trivial affairs. Parents who have a morbid outlook need not even discuss their philosophy of life in the presence of their children in order for the children to be influenced by their morbidity; their every action will indicate to a sensitive child the way they view life, and the child will unconsciously adopt the same attitude. It is not wholesome for a preadolescent child to discourse *too seriously* the importance of certain moral issues, religious topics, political questions, or even a vocation for himself. He should be conversant with such topics, but they should be incidental elements in his life.

As an illustration of a person who took himself *too* seriously, we may cite the case of the young man who, having made an appointment for an interview with his prospective employer, sat up all night and wrote a fifteen-page document narrating all the events in his past life that he could recall, mailing it to the person he was to interview so that nothing of significance would be omitted. Needless to say, the fifteen pages were not even read by the prospective employer. (The child should be taught to view himself with somewhat the same objectivity as outsiders view him.) When others will not waste time reading a fifteen-page biography of ourselves, why be conceited enough to write such a document?

Meticulous care about details may indicate an underlying feeling of insecurity. If a person is not sure of himself and does not know what things are important in life, it is easy to assume that everything is important and the only way to prevent failure is to make sure that nothing is left undone or slighted in any degree. One girl was ex-

ceedingly careful about her tasks and her possessions. She had an elaborate list of every article that she owned and, each night before retiring, had to make a complete check to see that nothing was missing. She outlined a detailed program for each day and lived up to it to the letter. Order and precision are good traits, to be sure, but when carried to such an extreme lead only to waste and inefficiency. This girl was in a state of constant fear lest she omit some task or lose some article.

A child of this sort will be afraid to answer any question in school unless absolutely certain of the right answer. Some teachers unwisely encourage such meticulous care. One little girl became extremely excited and afraid when she found that an examiner was timing her performance on a test. In short, a normal child will respond to a challenge with increased energy and zeal, while one with a feeling of insecurity will cringe at the approach of the slightest uncertainty. A child should not be taught to fear examinations but to enjoy the challenge they offer. To be sure, a child must learn a normal amount of caution, but we should not confuse caution with the fear of insecurity parading as a virtue.

Squirming, fidgeting, stuttering, and other forms of motor inco-ordination often indicate feelings of insecurity. As an illustration, a boy of eight was reported because he had a queer twitch of his facial muscles. This symptom is known as a tic. The teachers and mother had tried to make him correct it by calling his attention to it, which naturally made him more self-conscious about it and accentuated the twitching. It was learned that this boy, as well as his mother, were exceedingly afraid of his father and the symptom was a visible demonstration of this fear. The father was told of the situation and, being

an intelligent man who realized he had created the tension between himself and son due to an unconscious severity, he quickly removed the cause for tension and the boy's twitching disappeared.

Sleeplessness and sleep-walking episodes (nightmares) may indicate underlying anxieties. These often arise from fears of moral delinquency and of the consequences that the child has been told will follow any misconduct. When a mother tells her child that she cannot love her if she is naughty she may be laying the foundation for an anxiety that could easily lead to a night terror. This is illustrated by the fact that many children will call out in their sleep, "Mother, don't leave me!" It is not the fear that their mother will be taken away or that some one will take them from the mother, it is a fear that the mother no longer wants to stay which motivates such screaming.

Other symptoms of insecurity are enuresis, dishonesty, exhibitionism, nail biting, picking at various parts of the body, twisting clothing, twisting and scraping the feet on the floor, "nervous" headaches, indigestion, irritable spells, mutism, and many others.

Any fear whose source is not clearly recognized may lead to anxiety, and if the situation is related to some deeply hidden cause, the fear may lead to morbid anxiety. It is during the stage of adolescence that anxieties are likely to assume morbid proportions if they are not handled wisely. At this period of life the child often does not clearly recognize sex impulses as such. They are sensed merely as a queer feeling of restlessness which he often connects with a fear of something, he knows not what. Later, when they are recognized, any fear that comes in connection with them is likely to express itself

as a fear of some other factor. Such vague fears of unknown origin may do a child untold harm; they may be as damaging as a fear of spooks.

Every individual with a healthy body, from the age of adolescence up to the time of marriage, has the problem of restraining sexual impulses and using up sexual energy in other directions than the natural one. The teacher is the witness of these struggles in youth, and if she is to be of vital value to the pupils in this, their great struggle, she must understand the significance of certain signs which are almost sure to crop out. Youth should have abundant energy and this energy must have an outlet. The school can provide ready means for the expenditure of this energy in its various activities; but there are sure to be some who do not seem able to adjust their energy to these various expressions. The picture of anxiety is the sign to the teacher that the pupil who expresses it is not making the adjustment properly. That is, the anxiety is a frank and open confession of failure on the part of the one who shows it. By being morbidly anxious he is frankly saying: "I have a lot of pent-up energy in me which I do not understand and I am afraid that it will make me do something that will bring disgrace upon me." Such a person needs frank advice from one who understands the situation. It does no good to argue that the anxiety is groundless; no doubt the sufferer will admit this readily enough. The true nature of it has to be shown, and then the individual can make a conscious fight to overcome the difficulty.

There are various circumstances which aggravate this difficulty and, therefore, should be pointed out very clearly. Anything which tends to arouse the sexual life of boys and girls and leave them in a state of partial gratification is a potential cause of anxiety symptoms. A

certain amount of intersexual activity is certainly needed and advisable for young people. But, to promote unchaperoned parties in which the participants are permitted to indulge in practices which arouse them sexually makes the struggle for self-control more intense, and a certain number after any such experience are sure to confess by their symptoms that they are unable to adjust themselves to such a violent arousal of their sex life. It takes an open-minded administrator to get the proper balance in this matter. To take a prudish attitude simply makes the situation worse, because any attempt to keep the sexes strictly apart will only draw attention to the sex element in the relationships more violently than permitting freedom would do. The thing that is needed is a free and natural attitude. Cultivate this and you have done much toward the solution of the problem. Youths recognize the problem they have to face, and will welcome the assistance of elders who give evidence that they are eager to have the young people enjoy each others' company and that restraint is imposed only for the advantage of those who are restrained.

What the adolescent is likely to worry about, and what he is likely to fear, is that his love impulses may prove too strong for him; he may be forced to gratify them, and he is convinced that any mode of gratification with which he is familiar is wrong. If he is convinced that the impulses are wrong, why should he not worry?

Now the cure is not immorality. Some, when the dilemma is explained, think that the only solution is immediate gratification. All the individual really needs is a clear vision of the whole subject so that he can see some possible outlet, which may be in the distant future, but which offers a definite solution. The socially approved

outlet is to fall in love with some worthy individual and eventually marry. If the anxiety victim is talked with confidentially and is shown that he is fearing something which is noble, worthy, and perfectly controllable, and that there is a normal and approved outlet for him, there is no reason why he cannot be recovered from his anxiety symptoms.

The suffering experienced by the anxiety victim is the most exquisite form of torture imaginable. The onlooker does not begin to realize the depth of suffering involved. The patient covers it, he argues with himself, he diverts it from one thing to another in his attempt to be rid of it, but it persists and grows with the passing years until he sometimes succumbs and becomes a miserable wreck. There is no greater service that a teacher can perform for her students than to detect these cases in an early stage and straighten them out. Having helped one such case in its mild form, she may not realize the extent of service which she has performed; but, when she considers that she has possibly prevented an actual breakdown, she can get a partial glimpse of the service performed. It does no good to tell adolescent boys or girls that worry is of no value; they know that. The only solution is in each case to find the real cause of the worry and then remove it.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Morbid anxiety among school children is a sign that there is need for some social hygiene.
2. Anxiety cannot be remedied by fighting it. Substitute healthful outlets and wholesome activities in which the sexes can mingle and the anxieties will disappear.
3. In general try to cultivate such a matter-of-fact wholesome attitude between the sexes that they thoroughly enjoy each others' com-

pany. If you hold them apart with all sorts of restrictions each glimpse of one of the opposite sex will suggest forbidden things.

4. The teacher who is inexperienced in dealing with developing adolescents or who feels timidity in discussing sex matters with her pupils who seem to need help, should endeavor to secure the co-operation of some physician of the finer type to help her with her boys and should seek, when possible, the help of a woman physician or trained nurse in dealing with her girls. A number of simply written, unsentimental children's books on sex are now to be obtained. A troubled child may be greatly helped by reading one of these, but the book should be carefully selected.

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How may the teacher's personality influence her attitude toward a cringing child?
2. Distinguish between a temporary defeat and the habit of failure.
3. Describe three ways in which the habit of defeat may show itself, depending upon the type of person who possesses the habit.
4. Show how the feeling of insecurity may be developed.
5. How may hate hide a desire for love and affection?
6. Why must the development of feelings of independence be gradual?
7. What are some of the causes for parents and teachers to err in guiding the child to independence properly?
8. How may physical weakness make it easy for a child to develop feelings of insecurity?
9. How can a weak child be taught to feel secure?
10. Show the danger that arises from teaching a child to take life too seriously.
11. What is the significance of meticulous attention to minor details?
12. Enumerate some of the symptoms of feelings of insecurity.
13. What is the significance of morbid anxiety?
14. What can the teacher do to help a child who shows signs of excessive anxiety?



## CHAPTER XI

### BLAMING OTHERS

A very satisfying and widely used method of explaining away defeat is to blame others for our shortcomings. A young man who has failed to get a position will not admit the superiority of the successful candidate but will say that his rival had a pull because he was a relative or was engaged to the boss's daughter. If we invest in securities whose value goes down we say the "Wall Street Gang" manipulated things. If we cannot blame anything more tangible we console ourselves and cover our helplessness by saying, "It is God's will." Some individuals receive great satisfaction from blaming certain undesirable feelings or impulses upon the subtle influences playing on them through "animal magnetism," the "evil eye," witchcraft, and the like, claiming that the influences are produced by individuals who are trying to injure them. This form of excusing our failures is so satisfying that, once adopted, it is very hard to overcome. The only way to check it is to see that it never gets a strong hold on young individuals. This tendency, when carried to an extreme, leads to delusions of persecution which may be defended by great accumulations of evidence entirely false but implicitly believed in by the patient. Such patients are called, clinically, *paranoids*. The disease from which they suffer is called *paranoia*.

There may seem to be a wide gap between the delusions of persecution of the paranoid person and the weak attempts of a child to escape punishment by calling atten-

tion to the guilt of another child; but the former is merely a highly developed habit which had its origin in the evasions of childhood. Not only is the average teacher unaware of the significance of the early attempts of a child to blame others for his own shortcomings, but many teachers actually encourage such defenses.

A primary cause for this encouragement is the emphasis we tend to place on the bookkeeping aspect of morality; we look upon human morals as a system of debits and credits to be balanced against each other. When a misdemeanor has occurred the teacher is likely to devote herself to a search for the guilty person in order to see that he pays for the error either in restitution or in the proper amount of humiliation and repentance. Where more than one child is involved this task becomes complicated because someone must decide the exact distribution of guilt in order that each child implicated may take his just share of the blame and contribute his share to the debt. The whole emphasis is placed upon paying the debt instead of upon the reasons for the conduct and its significance in any larger social sense. Furthermore, if any child involved has been in other escapades, his credit is not regarded as very good, so he is given a heavier portion of the blame in some new crime; while a child who has been good is usually given an easy sentence because his credit is good at the "bank of morality."

Any intelligent child who watches the handling of moral accounts by the teacher sees that she makes mistakes because of ignorance of the facts, as well as because of her emotional prejudices. He sees that the smart thing to do is to distort evidence a little so as to enable him to avoid getting the worst of the bargain. He becomes adroit in twisting facts, in working upon the sympathies and preju-

dices of the teacher, in making the other children appear in a bad light, and thus he lightens the portion of the debt that he must pay. Once a child tries such a procedure, he is amazed at the ease with which he can evade punishment, with the way in which he can make some enemy pay the penalty for his misconduct; and finally he begins to believe that he is justified in his evasions and distortions.

Furthermore, groups of children learn that, if they can all combine in the technique of laying the blame on the other person, such a smoke screen is laid that, in the end, no one child suffers as much punishment as he would if they, with one accord, endeavored to co-operate in the task of making a rational analysis of the part each had played in the conduct in question. The more they can throw blame on the other the less punishment anyone has to take; it becomes a marvelous way to confuse the main issue and provides an excellent cover under which to escape. This is, incidentally, one of the oldest defenses of which we have any historical record. In the Garden of Eden, Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the snake. We are given to understand that the device was not very effective in this instance but the descendants of Adam and Eve have used this mechanism with much more success than did their father and mother. Why? Because those concerned have permitted themselves to have their attention distracted from the essential issue to a discussion of the relative blame of the participants.

This device would not be so effective if we did not place so much emphasis upon retributive punishment. The teacher would make a better contribution to the character training of her children if she would deal more with the causes for misbehavior and to instruction designed to avoid repetitions of offenses. If the emphasis is placed upon

detection and punishment the teacher is merely encouraging sharp practice and evasion. There is a reason for all conduct, moral or otherwise, and the end behavior can be understood only when the reasons for the conduct are known. Understanding makes much punishment unnecessary and even absurd.

In brief, the tendency to blame others is, in part, accounted for by the undue stress given to making someone pay for any infraction of a rule. The child is tempted to hunt for misdemeanors that may be had at a bargain price. He is tempted to run up charge accounts that he cannot pay and then to seek aid in avoiding payment. "Let the fellow who has been frugal in his moral delinquencies pay," reasons the moral debtor. "He can better afford to pay."

If the evasions we are discussing could always be in the spirit of fun, or if no one lost, the game might go on indefinitely with no particular harm to anyone. Unfortunately, someone is sure to get the worst of the bargain, someone suffers because of the distortions of the other children and because of the prejudices of the teacher. This engenders hate in the loser.

Any child tends to dislike those who make him uncomfortable, inefficient, unintelligent, immoral, fearful, ashamed, or unimportant. Such dislike becomes intensified if he thinks that he has been the victim of unfairness or of prejudice. If a child is punished at the same time that another child, whom he regards as being equally guilty, is not punished, is not the child likely to hate both the other child and the adult who judged the case and administered the punishment? Such hatred makes a child feel that he is justified in making the hated individual suffer on any possible occasion. He feels highly pleased if

he can outwit the teacher and have his enemies punished; his attitude is one of bitterness. The habit of blaming others when combined with hate makes a most pernicious combination.

Emphasis upon rigid discipline provides another force which accentuates the tendency to escape blame by putting it on others. Elders may believe that they see a real reason for every rule imposed upon the children and may logically justify every punishment; but children are not likely to view the situation in the same manner and often believe that the punishments that they have received are due to the ill-will of those who administer them.

Reassurances by elders that they are getting only what they "deserved," or that such punishment "hurts the elders more than it does the child," do no good but, on the contrary, tend to make the child more resentful. They feel that they are the victims of injustice. They hate those who are sneaks enough to spy on them. Their punishment does not make them feel any nobler or fill them with any intention to do better. It merely makes them hate the ones who do not get caught.

Even if it were possible to eliminate the obvious unfairness that accompanies the administration of punishments, another difficulty arises from the fact that we expect a child to play the game of life according to adult rules, rules which he does not understand and which make him take his losses when those losses are based on ignorance of the rules. We do not, in many instances, take time to learn what the child's understanding of the rules may be. If we did, fewer mistakes would be made in dealing with him. Would not any one of us think we had been abused if we were induced to play a card game and were made to abide by rules of which we were ignorant

until we broke them? If we lost in such a game would we not be justified in saying that we had been fleeced? If a child does not understand why he is punished, is it not natural that he should attribute it to the hostility of those who brought the punishment upon him?

As long as the motive for punishment is retribution the child is justified in his resentment against those who punish him. He is correct in his conviction that such punishment expresses hostility on their part. The only educational justification for punishment is when the punishment is a direct consequence of the act of the child himself. If a punishment comes directly and automatically whenever the child performs a certain act, the punishment will be a deterrent of the act in question and may be defended on such grounds. When the punishment comes through some intermediary, is delayed, or uncertain, the child sees no direct relation between his act and the punishment, even though adults may tell him the relationship is direct, and looks upon the one who administers the punishment (and not upon himself) as the cause of his punishment. The teacher may assert that the child is not correct in interpreting the situation in such a fashion; but the important factor is how he *does* interpret it and not whether or not he is justified in so doing.

Antagonism toward the one who administers punishment is somewhat proportional to the amount of pain or discomfort experienced by the child. For example, one boy showed definite antagonism toward his father because he was habitually whipped by him. He got along much better both at home and at school when the father was absent on an extended trip.

On the other hand, a nagging, scolding mother may do just as much damage as a whipping father. One boy, who

had been watched over by an oversolicitous mother, finally became desperate. He gathered all his possessions in a single room, secured a lock for which he alone had a key, and ordered his mother to stay out. When he discovered that she had broken in (ostensibly to clean his room) he became so angry that he actually struck her. In a panic she called the police and accused him of brutal violence. His final outburst was merely the sequel to a growing resentment which had been restrained for a long period of time.

Other parents do not go to either of the extremes mentioned in the two preceding cases but are none the less irritating to their children. One mother reports that her boy had "abominable" table manners, but that she and her husband refrained from scolding him openly. They, nevertheless, "froze him with a glance" when he did not behave properly. They complained that he had developed an antagonistic attitude and when they tried to humiliate him he merely emphasized his bad manners, smacking his lips, chewing with his mouth open, wiping his teeth with his tongue, snuffing his nose, and the like. All these acts, they were sure, were done out of spite. A child will not act spitefully toward one whom he believes is really trying to help him. Such an attitude on the part of a child should convince adults that there is something wrong in the way the child has been, or is being, treated.

The child who is treated harshly by his parents or teachers is not likely to explain such treatment on the same basis as do those who abuse him. They argue that they are doing it for his good, that he deserves it, or that he must be punished so as to warn the other children against acting as he has done. The child merely sees the abuse and seeks for the explanation for the dislike which the harsh

treatment signifies to him. If he observes that some other child (especially a brother or sister) is not treated with the same severity, it is only natural that he should interpret this difference as partiality and not as the consequence of any difference in conduct. He is abused, while another child is praised and treated with consideration, therefore this other child is the favorite and this favoritism is the basis for the mistreatment he has received. So he reasons. He wishes the other child were out of the way. Every instance where the rival is praised increases the hatred and, should the parents or teacher be unwise enough to point to the favored child as a good "example," the hatred is accentuated. The other child is blamed for all the abuse that the punished child believes he is receiving.

The jealousy thus aroused is very likely to stimulate attempts at retaliation. Silent hate is not very satisfying, so the child searches for opportunities to cause discomfort to the object of his jealousy. Should he be caught in his attempts to injure his rival he is punished or scolded. This confirms his suspicions; his mother, father, or teacher are taking sides against him and are his enemies. If his elders co-operate in punishing him, he becomes sure that they all hate him and that they are united in their intent to cause him suffering.

Jealousy may not be recognized until some overt attempt to injure the object of jealousy makes it apparent. A boy who has professed great love for his sister may suddenly waylay her with a knife, may tempt her to put her hand on a hot stove, may induce her to climb out upon some dangerous projection of a roof, may try to smother her with a pillow, or may even set a deadfall for her. The dismayed parents search for some immediate cause for such behavior or explain it as a natural perversity of the



child. They fail, very often, to recognize that underneath the professed love (which really was a mask to hide the hate) has been smoldering a resentment at the favoritism shown the girl.

When such behavior is discovered the usual tendency is to show the child how terrible the attitude of hate really is, or to dwell upon the possibility of fatal results from his behavior; all of which encourages him to hate the rival the more and, in addition, to disguise his real feelings with greater cunning. Instead, hatred and jealousy should be recognized as evidences of real or fancied abuse which is attributed by the child to favoritism. The victim of hate and jealousy seldom discerns his real feelings, he is likely to feel abused, neglected, and lonely. He is hungry for love; he thinks that he loves others but that his love is not returned. The cure is not to punish him for his hate but to eliminate personal comparisons and to build in him the assurance that he has a fixed place in the affections of those whose love he craves. Hate expresses an underlying hunger for love. Jealousy is a mask to cover the inability to gain affection, a disguise which hides such failure by blaming it upon the seductive influence of a rival.

It is an easy matter to extend a hostile attitude so that it is not only directed against the person who appears to have robbed the child of the love he craves, but against any innocent person or object. For example, a child may whip her doll unmercifully or may take great delight in mutilating or teasing an animal. In other instances, the hate may spread to other children or even to adults. It may be disguised as fun and the person becomes addicted to practical jokes, whose main object is to humiliate other persons in any possible manner. The joke element

is merely a mask to cover the hatred which lies behind the entire performance.

The following case illustrates how the beginnings of the attitude of hate may begin in seemingly trivial acts and grow into more pronounced manifestations if the child is not treated correctly. A little boy, about five years of age, began to "show off" a great deal. His mother, not realizing that this was an attempt on his part to get some of the attention which was being given to a younger brother, scolded him for his queer antics and pretended to ignore him all the more. Instead of stopping his annoying mannerisms, he extended them and used them not only with his family but with others. He learned to excel especially in those things that his mother disliked and for which she punished him. He seemed to get his keenest delight from getting his younger brother into predicaments. For example, he took his younger brother on a climbing expedition over the scaffolding of a new building, daring him to climb the most dangerous spots. When his mother explained that such conduct on his part was both bad and dangerous, he proceeded to follow it with a series of attempts to get his brother into still more hazardous situations, such as taking him for a walk on the railroad tracks and across the busiest streets in his neighborhood. When the teacher refused to permit him to co-operate with the rest of the class in some joint project (in order to punish him), he proceeded to break into the school at night and wrecked the stage that the rest of the class had constructed. When his guilt was discovered, he became the center of a great amount of unpleasant criticism but, to the surprise of all concerned, he did not seem to be disturbed by the universal disapproval of his conduct. In fact, he really appeared to enjoy being the center of so

much attention, even though it was of the critical variety. It was really better, to his way of thinking, to be criticized than to be ignored.

The authorities had begun to treat this boy as a delinquent, failing to recognize that his misconduct was motivated by a desire to get some recognition and affection from those he respected. They could not understand why a boy would do things that brought punishment and reproaches upon him when he was anxious to get affection. They admitted that the more he was punished the more mischief he contrived to perform. The boy himself confessed, after his confidence had been gained, that he felt strong impulses to do something "bad." These came almost invariably after he had been snubbed or when others had received some particular recognition. The correctness of our hypothesis was substantiated by the change in attitude and in behavior which resulted when the boy's mother and teachers were induced to treat him differently. When they paid little attention to his misconduct but, instead, gave him legitimate ways to gain recognition he ceased to misbehave.

In other instances the child may not be so ready to act upon his hatred, but stores it up and dwells, in his thinking, upon the abuses he has suffered. His entire outlook upon life becomes one of hate and suspicion. He has suffered only pain at the hands of others; he suspects that all persons are made over the same pattern and are only awaiting some opportunity to do him injury. He must, consequently, be continually on his guard against them. Such attitudes provide a fertile soil for the development of pathological delusions. The individual who fosters these suspicions and hatreds imagines all sorts of intrigues that his enemies perform to keep him down, he obtains great

satisfaction from working out counterplots, and soon finds himself substituting such phantasies for real adjustment and begins to believe in their reality. When he gets to this point he becomes totally separated from reality and lives in the world of delusion.

The difficulty with this type of mask is that the teacher does not suspect what is going on because the child is very careful to conceal his imaginings and she can only detect it from little signs of withdrawal from other children, indications of hostility to them when he does have to meet them, and slight evidences of suspicion. The teacher should not wait for signs of a mature delusion before she acts. The slightest indication of hatred and suspicion should be enough of a warning to her to call forth her best efforts to effect a better attitude on the part of the child toward other children as well as toward adults. Substitute a feeling of love and co-operation for that of hate and suspicion by placing the child in social situations where he is made happy through the recognition and respect of his fellows.

This can be done by dropping remarks to leaders in the group about some good qualities of the boy who is antagonistic. This will make them like him with no awareness on their part of how or why their attitude is changed. A change in attitude on the part of the teacher toward the child will help. He can be given some opportunity to succeed in a task (a play, a recitation, a game, or any similar activity), and his self-esteem thus raised. As he gains in self-respect, because of the signs of approval which he receives from others, he will not expect others to hate him, for he will need no such excuse for his failures. Substitute the habit of social success for the habit of social failure and the child will have no need for disguising his failures by the use of hate and suspicion.

If such treatment is not begun in time the attitudes of hate and suspicion may grow to such an extent that they may lead to pathological delusions of persecution. The following case illustrates the development of a crude delusion in a girl, a delusion which grew from an early feeling that she was not loved by her father.

This girl developed an apparent dislike for her father because she felt that he was partial to her sister. She looked for all sorts of evidence of such partiality and, in her deluded state, found very queer bits of evidence. For example, she says that, when she was a little girl, her father took her and her sister out on the porch to see a whippoorwill. The bird looked at her in a very queer manner and thus revealed to her the fact that the bird recognized that she was not a real daughter of her father, but that her sister was. Since that time she has tried to find her real father because she knew that he would love her. She asserted that her father suspected her motives and has done everything in his power to thwart her, hiring men to spy on her all the time. While she was at home, she felt that some men had arranged a "dictaphone" in her apartment to listen to any conversation she might carry on. She felt that these men had rented the apartment next to her for that purpose. One night she saw a man's shadow moving over the wall. When it reached the head of her bed it took the form of a golden bird. The bird seemed to tell her that her throat was going to be clipped and all of the spirits would be released. Voices kept repeating through the night that her throat was going to be clipped. In the morning she saw a bird on the window sill which took a couple of steps forward and then took a couple of steps backward. The bird seemed almost to speak to her. Just then a male voice from the

hall told her to stay in bed. She felt sure that the men in the next apartment were watching her all the time that the bird was telling her that her throat was going to be clipped.

All this can be interpreted as the phantasy of a girl who, as a child, had a great longing for love. Not receiving the love of her father, she became jealous of her sister and imagined that she had a real father whom she was never able to locate. She believed that if she could find him she would get the love she so much desired. The fictitious father, she thought, prevented this because he hated her.

This girl came to our attention at the age of thirty. At that time she had advanced so far in her delusions, and in the satisfaction she obtained from blaming others for her unhappiness that little could be done. The important deduction from this case is that she did not develop her attitude suddenly, but gave signs of it all through her girlhood, signs that a discerning teacher should have been able to detect and to interpret. Had she fallen into the hands of such a discerning teacher and had she been given an opportunity to gain affection and recognition, she might have been cured instead of being forced to spend a large part of her life in an institution for mental disorders.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Be more concerned with the discovery of the cause of acts of misconduct than with fixing the blame.
2. Avoid the use of retributive punishment, that is, punishment whose only purpose it is to exact a penalty for a misdemeanor. The only time that punishment can be justified is when it operates to prevent a repetition of misconduct. Do not apply punishment until reasonably sure that it will act as a deterrent and check up later to

determine whether it has accomplished this purpose. If it does not measure up to this test it had better be discarded.

3. A child who is secure in his friendships will not be jealous or hate others. Where these two attitudes are found, strive to effect a better social adjustment.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What is the defense mechanism used by paranoid patients?
2. What childhood defense mechanism is the precursor of paranoia?
3. Blaming others is encouraged by emphasis upon what phase of morality?
4. How may a group of children combine in their use of the mechanism of blaming the other child?
5. How does emphasis upon retributive punishment encourage children to throw the blame upon each other?
6. Show how hate develops from a situation where rigid discipline is practiced.
7. Trace the ill effects that result when a child is punished without clear understanding on his part of the significance of his acts.
8. Show how punishment develops definite antagonisms in children.
9. Describe the development of jealousy.
10. Trace the development of delusions and show how they are related to hate and jealousy.
11. What are the symptoms of an underlying jealousy?
12. Outline some practical methods by means of which hate and jealousy may be overcome.

## CHAPTER XII

### BACKBITING AND REFORMING OTHERS

We can usually estimate the qualities which we possess by comparing ourselves with others. We are tall or short in relation to the height of those about us. A man may be a great man in a small town but sink to insignificance in a large city. A boy may be an angel compared with some of the rough boys in the neighborhood, but a young imp compared with his well-behaved sister. A child may have hands that are clean in contrast with those of one who has been tinkering with an automobile, but that may appear very dirty when superimposed upon white dining linen. It does not take a child long to learn this law of contrast. He is constantly told to be as good as his father was when he was a boy; to be as clean as his less active sister; to be as obedient to his mother as Johnny, who lives next door, is to his mother, etc. It is not long until he begins to apply the principle in the opposite direction — to excuse his defects by pointing out similar or worse ones in others. When chided for slang or profanity, he will answer, "I heard Daddy say it; so why can't I?" When told by his mother not to touch things on the store counter, he will reply, "Well, you touched them, didn't you?" Thus the child directs attention from himself to the shortcomings of others in order to escape criticism.

No one individual is superior in all traits although he may excel in some. The balance between excellence and imperfection usually keeps one in an adequately humble



attitude and yet gives him enough self-esteem to enable him to compete with his fellows. Children understand this balance pretty well, for if one of their number seems to excel in any one thing the rest are very likely to pick some flaw in his make-up and hold it up to him in order to humble him.

The feeling of inferiority is impressed more strongly than is usual on some individuals because of the fact that they have some marked defect which makes them the butt of the ridicule of their comrades. In such a case the inferiority is a fact, it must be faced as such, and the individual must make the best of it. In other cases, the inferiority is not so apparent to others as it is to the person who feels it. Whether the person is actually inferior, or only believes himself to be, the results are the same — the actual facts are not so important as the attitude of the person.

Now, the best attitude for the individual to take upon the discovery of a defect is to avoid reliance on excuses, to admit the defect, and to try to correct it. It does no good to try to cover a real defect. If it is not possible to correct it, one should be willing to face it and admit its existence; if it can be corrected, it should be faced as a first step towards correction. It would be erring on the safe side to admit a defect that did not exist rather than to refuse to admit one that did; that is, to one's self. One makes a much more abnormal reaction in trying to cover up some peculiarity than he ever would in admitting a real or unreal defect and trying to improve himself in a rational manner.

Reaction to the knowledge or the suspicion that one is not perfect may take any of the forms that any other conflict may take. A favorite type of defense is to find flaws

in others. This contrast of one's defects with the flaws in others may help to raise one's ego. If I can prove that all my comrades are ugly, my sense of my own lack of beauty is not so poignant. If another has more money than I have and I can show that he got it through dishonest means, I have compensated for my poverty by a show of virtue. When this species of consolation is carried to an extreme degree, it produces a hard, crabbed, unsympathetic individual who will have no mercy on another, but who will gloat over the misfortunes of others, because thus he makes himself appear better by comparison.

The tendency to inflate one's self-esteem by jeering at the failures of others starts very early in childhood; in the schoolroom you may see some children tittering at the discomfiture of others. Many an ignorant teacher aggravates this attitude and thinks that a good way to punish an offender is to get the other children to ridicule him. It may serve her immediate purpose, but she is setting up an inferiority feeling in the ridiculed child that may later prove serious; and she is doing the children who laugh and titter an injury in that she is teaching them a wrong method of gratifying their own pride.

Children should be taught better methods of gaining self-esteem than by falsely inflating their own egos by maligning other children for their misconduct, ridiculing them for their awkwardness, teasing them about their peculiarities, or doing anything to make them appear to poor advantage in the schoolroom or on the playground. The teacher should realize clearly that such methods do not demonstrate the nobility of the one who does the backbiting but, on the contrary, indicate that he feels inferior. It is the criminal who likes to drag others down

to his level. The dope-fiend tries to get others to become addicted to the same habits that are ruining him. The drunkard wants everybody else to drink, not because of his conviviality, but to bring all those around him to the same level of debauchery. In short, the one who criticizes others most viciously is really parading his own weakness in so doing. While this tendency begins in childhood, it may continue throughout life, becoming more pronounced as the individual develops more subtle ways of holding others up for ridicule.

No matter how much of a failure one may have made of himself, he can always look around and find others who have done as badly or a little worse. The greater the number of those who have done as badly or worse, the greater the self-elation that results from the survey. Thus, we may find a bachelor who has moments when he feels that he has lost a great deal in life by not uniting with one of the beautiful women he sees all about him. He may then begin to console himself by noting the large number of other males in the same condition. This, however, is not very satisfactory; for the number of such bachelors is much less than the number of married men. If, on the other hand, he can make himself believe that the married men have been unwise in marrying, and that the wise and happy men are single, he has increased his satisfaction with himself many-fold. Consequently, it is very common to find the single man, or the married man who has made a bad bargain, poking fun at those who have put their necks into the noose of marriage. The following quotation is a sample of this type of defense wit:

The most effective lure that a woman can hold out to a man is the lure of what he fatuously conceives to be her beauty. This so-called beauty, of course, is almost always a pure

illusion. The female body, even at its best, is very defective in form; it has harsh curves and very clumsily distributed masses; compared to it the average milk-jug, or even cuspidor, is a thing of intelligent and gratifying design. . . . But this lack of genuine beauty in women lays on them no practical disadvantage in the primary business of their sex, for its effects are more than overborne by the emotional suggestibility, the herculean capacity for illusion, the almost total absence of critical sense of men. Men . . . show no talent whatever for differentiating between the artificial and the real. A film of face powder, skillfully applied, is as satisfying to them as an epidermis of damask. The hair of a dead Chinaman, artfully dressed and dyed, gives them as much delight as the authentic tresses of Venus. A false hip intrigues them as effectively as the soundest one of living fascia. A pretty frock fetches them quite as surely as lovely legs, shoulders, hands, or eyes. . . . The tendency of the first-rate man to remain a bachelor is very strong . . . and in different parts of the world various expedients have been resorted to, to overcome this reluctance to marriage among the better sort of men. . . . But the best of them nevertheless lean to celibacy, and plans for overcoming their habits are frequently proposed and discussed. One such plan involves a heavy tax on bachelors. The defect lies in the fact that the average bachelor, for obvious reasons, is relatively well to do, and would pay the tax rather than marry. Moreover, the payment of it would help to salve his conscience, which is now often made restive, I believe, by a maudlin feeling that he is shirking his duty to the race, and so he would be confirmed and supported in his determination to avoid the altar. Still further, he would escape the social odium which now attaches to his celibacy, for whatever a man pays for is regarded as his right. As things stand, that odium is of definite potency, and undoubtedly has its influence upon a certain number of men in the lower ranks of bachelors. They stand, so to speak, in the twilight zone of bachelorhood, with one leg furtively over the altar rail; it needs only an extra pull to bring them to the sacrifice. But if they could compound for their immunity by a cash indemnity it is highly probable

that they would take on new resolution, and in the end they would convert what remained of their present disrepute into a source of egoistic satisfaction, as is done, indeed, by a great many bachelors even today. These last immoralists are privy to the elements which enter into that disrepute; the ire of women whose devices they have resisted, and the envy of men who have succumbed.<sup>1</sup>

This is an admirable defense for an antisocial attitude. The writer and a few other courageous men are apparently the only ones who have survived the wiles of females to seduce them! It is only one step further to an actual belief that the females are in active pursuit, such as is shown in the case that follows:

A young unmarried preacher — a High Church Episcopalian — several years ago gave promise of being a very successful man, but now, through a number of peculiar characteristics and contradictory forms of behavior, seems about to ruin his career. When he first accepted the position in which he is serving, his impression upon his congregation was striking — most of his people thought that he was remarkably able. That impression has been entirely changed within one short year because of his abnormal attitude in relation to sex. His sermons show that he is personally and vitally concerned in the message that he is delivering. He gets very much in earnest, pounds the pulpit, shouts, goes almost into a frenzy in the storms against sin, which to him is a synonym for any form of sex conduct. Practically all his sermons are of this type. He is calm and almost uninteresting when he deals temporarily with any purely theological theme; but is intense when raging against dancing, short skirts, flapperism, bobbed hair, rouge, and vice, which to him all belong in the same

<sup>1</sup> Mencken, H. L., *In Defense of Women*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1922.

class. So violent is he in his antagonism to any form of courtship that he forbids the young boys and girls of his parish to walk home from church together. If any young girl disobeys this injunction she is barred from being confirmed. It must be a choice with her whether she will give up all social relations with men or give up confirmation. In order further to protect innocent girls from male wiles, he himself often escorts them home from service, giving them each a kiss upon parting. In spite of the fact that he raves against immodest dress, his room is decorated with pictures — some of which are advertising posters — showing girls clad in scanty apparel.

He seemingly has a Herculean task to ward off the advances of all the spinsters in the parish. He will come home, for instance, and almost in a frenzy begin to denounce a certain woman who has had the temerity to invite him to some function. He will throw up his arms and almost scream in his denunciation of her wiles in thus trying to seduce him. Finally, he will become calm and accept the invitation. However, despite his acceptance, he will act in a boorish and churlish manner to the imagined seducer. His hostess, on these occasions, naturally thinks him rude and resents his needless rebuffs. He thus makes himself hateful in order to repel advances he merely imagines. He seems to take delight in defaming the characters of innocent girls in his congregation. He selects some especially attractive girl and talks about her in the most degrading manner to others of his "fold" without grounds for so doing. In one such instance, this scandal-mongering came to the ears of the girl's relatives and he was confronted with it by the girl herself. He had absolutely nothing to reply, but since that time, has seemed afraid of this girl and avoids her as if in terror. He carries

a pistol to protect himself from imagined pursuers. There is probably mental justification for this for he actually has injured many persons. As a matter of fact, however, no one has made any threat to do him bodily harm. When he meets those whom he has defamed, he becomes unctuous, flattering, and fawning in a sickening fashion. Although he seems to think all his parishioners are vile, he takes little apparent interest in their spiritual uplift or salvation, in spite of his eloquence against vice; and when called at night to visit the bedside of a dying parishioner, he has been known to refuse to go and to show no concern upon learning of the neglected individual's death.

All this is obviously a defense mechanism. The minister is trying to live a celibate life. When some female appeals to him as a possible mate, he is horrified by the thought; but, instead of blaming himself for the thought, he condemns the manners, dress, or character of the innocent woman. He defames her because he would like to do the things that he accuses her of doing. Moreover, because of his secret wish to gratify his sex desires, the young minister shows yet another form of avoiding the confession of a defect — in his sermons, to cover what he considers a weakness, he shows the opposite characteristic in an extreme degree, denouncing all things connected with sex in an unnaturally vehement fashion.

When an individual has formed the habit of disparaging others, when he becomes overcritical of them and continually ridicules all their actions, the influence of such an attitude spreads from person to person in an almost endless chain. For example, a boy of nine was reported by his teachers for conduct which they interpreted as malicious in intent. He would break the toys of other children, he would ridicule any child who made a mistake in recitation,

and would manifest a violent dislike for any child who did exceptionally good school work. Investigation revealed that he had a very inconsistent attitude toward his older brother (aged 14). At one moment he would manifest great fondness for him and at the next violent hatred. This dual attitude of love and hate for the same person is known as *ambivalence*, and indicates an internal conflict of some sort. The older boy had marked symptoms of instability such as picking his nose, biting his nails and eating the hard portions of skin from the fingers around the nails, pulling at buttons on his clothing, clawing at his head, pinching his skin in spots until he produced sore spots, and displaying violent fits of temper. This older boy made life miserable for his younger brother. He teased him continually, nagged at him to do things around the house, ridiculed all his attempts to do mechanical work, and made life so uncomfortable in general that the younger boy avoided his home as much as possible, inventing all sorts of excuses for spending his time elsewhere. It was clear that the younger boy's unkind treatment of the other children could be traced to the influence of this older brother.

The older boy, in turn, had developed his attitude as a result of contact with a maladjusted father. The father at one time had been particularly stalwart and had worked himself from a very inferior status to a position of some importance. A heart attack left him a virtual invalid. He was able to get around the house but he could not follow his vocation. Unable to support his family he became dependent upon charity and the mother had to support him and the children. In the guise of training his son (the 14-year-old boy) to become the same successful man that he considered himself to have been before



his misfortune, he became very critical of his every act. There was continual wrangling about every trivial occurrence in the home. The father called his son disparaging names and ridiculed his every performance. The situation was accentuated by the fact that the boy admired his father and took seriously all his vicious criticisms. For example, if the boy attempted to make an airplane the father would come upon the half-finished product, would fly into an apparent rage, tell his son that he had not done it correctly, and break it to pieces. Thereupon the father would start a new one to show his son how to do it; but as soon as the boy contributed any part of the work he would berate him again although, in the judgment of any impartial critic, the boy performed as well as his father.

The father was attempting to bolster up his own feelings of importance rather than to instruct his son. He knew that he had failed but wanted it to appear that his son was failing to a greater degree so that he could get some consolation for his own misfortune. His thin disguise did not deceive outsiders to any great extent but it did great damage to his son. This son copied the same defense pattern from his father and exercised it upon his younger brother. The younger brother, in turn, used the same means for attempting to improve his self-esteem that he had learned from his father and brother.

It is not difficult to see the harm resulting from such behavior on the father's part because it is carried to an extreme that makes the ill effects obvious. It is much more difficult to note the earliest beginnings of this mechanism and to stop the process before it has had an opportunity to become a habit. This defense mechanism of disparaging others to improve our own position has its beginnings in emphasis upon personal comparisons. The

teacher would do well to avoid all occasions where personal comparisons are made between children. Such comparisons may be excused on the ground that they stimulate improvement in the one who suffers by contrast, but such an excuse has little weight when it is recognized that the inferior child suffers humiliation and the exalted one is merely tempted to develop an unwarranted conceit. When the child who has failed consoles himself by comparing himself with another who has done still worse, the dangers from personal contrasts become accentuated. Failure should stimulate a child to strive for improvement and not to hunt for someone else who has failed to a greater degree. The latter does not lead to improvement but to contentment with failure. The genuine preventive measure that the teacher should use is to help each child to work toward his own personal improvement without reference to the relation of his accomplishment to the success or failure of others.

The attempt to reform others disguises with still greater subtlety the desire to improve one's self-esteem by the device of contrasting one's self with less fortunate individuals. When a person attempts to reform others he is usually publishing the fact that he is better than the one who needs reformation. By such an implied announcement he conceals the fact that he is inferior or that his main objective is to gain renown as one who gives himself for the welfare of those about him. He is usually less concerned with others than with himself. His reformation activities serve as a cloak to cover his own weaknesses.

It is often said that the most zealous reformer is the one who has once succumbed to, or been tempted severely by, the vices from which he is trying to save others. The most eloquent temperance lecturer is a converted drunkard.

One way by which the ex-drunkard can stay reformed is to throw all his energy into opposition; of course he is likely thus to become an extremist. The young girl who feels tempted to indiscretion may become a prude; she overbalances herself in resisting temptation. The young man with a temptation to gamble perhaps raves against cards, horse-racing, and baseball; he cannot view any of the means of gambling with equanimity because they are all temptations and must be resisted with vehemence. The professional reformer must as a rule be one who would be peculiarly susceptible to the vice or condition he is opposing else he cannot muster enough fervor to carry across his propaganda.

When a person works out his conflicts by attempts to reform others, he is able to hide his real motives in conducting the reform because outsiders are likely to pass judgment upon the merits of his reform activities instead of studying the motives which actuate the reformer. He is credited with the noblest of intentions when he may be extremely self-centered in his drive toward reformation. He may do some good but he is likely also to do harm because he is driven only by his own emotions and not by any cool analysis of all the elements in a situation.

The way in which the ambition to reform the rest of the world may develop is well illustrated in the following case. A very bright boy had reached his last year in high school after having made excellent grades all through his school career but had not received any great recognition from his classmates. He liked to talk a lot in class and to write bizarre articles for the high school paper or to do anything that drew attention to himself. Without any foresight on his part he suddenly found himself in the limelight. He had made a statement in one of his

classes to the effect that the class officers had been elected by political intrigue, that the funds of the high school were being misused, and that the whole school was dominated by a political machine, comparable in its corruption to some that existed in the state political system. His teacher reprimanded him for making statements which he could not substantiate. He retaliated by saying that he could substantiate them. He set out to gather evidence secretly and eventually a public hearing was held. The result was a re-election, but the most important result, for him, was the great amount of public acclaim and attention that he received. It all ended in a ceremony in which the principal of the school commended him in the presence of the entire school body.

From that time the boy had visions of reforming the world, thought he was an Abraham Lincoln come back to earth to right great wrongs. He did not know what the wrongs were but was sure that it was his mission to correct them. Not being able to engage in another major reform in college, although he tried his best to discover one, he sought various substitute ways for gaining notoriety. He wrote various articles which were in very bad taste and, when they were rejected by the college paper, asserted that the paper was dominated by the faculty and that freedom of speech was denied to the more progressive students. Not gaining much publicity by such methods he resorted to such devices as raising a beard, wearing freakish clothes, and asserting that he was a communist. He knew little about communism, or about capitalism, but was sure that he was going to overthrow the latter because, he insisted, it was the cause of all the evils in the world. His classmates and the faculty of the college which he was attending had the good judgment

not to become aroused by his activities and thus avoided possible unwise activities on their part and thereby contributed as well to the mental welfare of the boy himself. Every encouragement of such a person by taking up his suggestions is merely that much training in making him an habitual reformer.

An historical example of great social changes being wrought by such a person is found in the life of William Lloyd Garrison and in his abolitionist activities. Long before he became interested in slavery, he was engaged in advocating temperance, in fighting lotteries, in opposing imprisonment for debt, in seeking legislation to make it illegal to desecrate the Sabbath, and in working for universal peace. From his manifold activities it is reasonable to suppose that he was primarily a reformer, an agitator, and "that the abolition of slavery was merely one method of expression for this more fundamental drive."<sup>1</sup>

This underlying drive was probably the outgrowth of a failure which he experienced when a young man. He had attempted to deliver a political speech which he had memorized, but his memory failed him and he was forced to read it. The newspapers described his attempt at speechmaking as a presumptuous act on the part of an unknown young workman. To this he replied: "It is true my acquaintance in this city is limited — I have sought for none. Let me assure him [the editor], however, that if my life be spared, my name shall one day be known to the world — at least to such an extent that common inquiry shall be unnecessary. This, I know, will be deemed excessive vanity — but time shall prove it prophetic." He repeated this boast in a letter to another newspaper a year later.

<sup>1</sup> Hartman, D. A., "The Psychological Point of View in History: Some Phases of the Slavery Struggle," *Jour. Abn. Psychol.*, 1922, 17, pp. 262-264.

If we could only realize that when a reformer becomes too zealous he is probably working for his own advancement and not so much for the "cause," we would not become so easily involved in his schemes at reformation.

The teacher should recognize backbiting and reformation activities on the part of a child as symptoms that he is failing and that he needs some means for raising his self-confidence. She cannot increase his self-esteem by calling his attention to the real significance of his behavior. Such a move on her part would only accentuate the zeal of his defensive behavior and tempt him to mask his actions with greater cunning. She should enable him to achieve some real success and thereby remove the need for utilizing a procedure which, at best, provides but little temporary consolation and, in the end, leads to the discomfiture of all involved. The child is not likely to persist in backbiting and reforming unless he finds that the teacher is responsive to such activities.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Avoid personal comparisons. If you wish to display specimens of excellent work, select those whose authorship is unknown, particularly of pupils of previous years.

2. Never humiliate a child by making a display of his poor work, nor permit the other children to ridicule him or take advantage of his failure in any manner.

3. Be alert to the very first indication that a child is bolstering up his pride by contrast with less fortunate classmates.

4. When a child reformer is discovered do not become involved in his reformation activities. If they are needed reforms have someone who is less emotional and who has more rational balance carry them out. Enable the "reformer" to gain success in other fields than "uplifting" his classmates.

## QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the importance of personal comparisons in evaluating human qualities.
2. Why is the attitude of a child toward his own inferiority more important than the inferiority itself?
3. What is the value of admitting frankly the presence of a defect?
4. Indicate how finding flaws in others increases the status of one with an inferiority feeling.
5. Why does the inferior person desire to make others inferior?
6. How should a child be treated who takes peculiar delight in the humiliation of other children?
7. What is frequently the impelling motive in a reformer?
8. Show how the habit of reforming others may be established.
9. Why are many reforms carried out irrationally?
10. What effect does it have to reveal to a backbiter or a reformer the real reason for his activities?

## CHAPTER XIII

### COMPENSATION

The bitterness of a defeat may be offset to some extent if the loser is enabled to match failure with a victory. Inability to make the ball team may be counterbalanced by election to the presidency of the class. The ridicule received from one child may lose its force if other children manifest their approval. A physical defect may not be such a grievance to the child who is able to win academic laurels. The person who makes a poor salary may forget his financial status if he wins recognition because of his professional standing. This balancing of success against failure, of virtues against vices, of assets against liabilities, is a valuable method of avoiding the loss of self-confidence when some failure is encountered.

If executed consistently the mechanism of compensation eliminates the ultra high peaks of success by balancing them with failures and it also raises the valleys of failure by balancing them with successes. The majority of children learn to smooth out the hills and valleys of elation and depression. Others seem to enjoy the ups and downs and even to accentuate them; they learn to make life like a ride on a "roller coaster," so that, when they become adults, they will experience a succession of rises to dizzy heights separated by breath-taking plunges into despair. When such alternations of excitement and depression become so extreme as to seem to be pathological they are called manic-depressive episodes and are the characteristic symptoms of a disease known as manic-depressive psychosis.



The time to teach a child how to use effectively the balancing forces of compensation is in childhood. The teacher should attempt to teach the child balance when he manifests the first signs of enjoying too much of either excessive exaltation or despair. All normal children will have periods of keen excitement and happiness when some unusually propitious event occurs and all will experience sorrow upon occasion. It is when such variations of elation and depression are excessive, when they are repeated too often, or when they are out of all proportion to the causal factors that they should be regarded as danger signals.

The use of compensation to iron out transient variations in success and failure is but a minor function of this defense mechanism. It assumes much greater importance when it is used to effect a more permanent adjustment and becomes dangerous when it is adopted unconsciously. The teacher should have a very clear conception of the operation of this form of defense, should be alert to signs of its presence, and should be adroit in guiding children to better adjustments when compensation seems to be operating excessively, too habitually, or without insight on the part of the child.

The study of compensation may emphasize the underlying causes which make compensation necessary, the forms that compensations take, or the results of compensatory activity. A complete study of any individual case should consider all of these phases.

The first use of compensation often results from some accidental circumstance. For example, a child who has been impressed with his lack of physical beauty may become very sensitive about this deficiency. By chance he happens to find out that he can run faster than the other

children of his age. This accomplishment brings him enough pleasure to counterbalance, for the moment at least, his feeling of chagrin because of his appearance. Upon the next occasion when he is reminded of his lack of beauty, he brings forward his ability to run, either by talking about it or by striving to create a situation where he can again compete in running. If he continues to succeed in his running, he comes to balance physical prowess against beauty and may be observed training himself with great zeal. Furthermore, he will try to impress others with the superior value of physical stamina and to disparage the individuals who possess beauty but lack strength. If he gains satisfaction easily from such an adjustment, he may never go to extremes. Should he still be taunted about his appearance, or if he should be led to doubt the importance of physical strength, he will be tempted to exaggerate his efforts toward athletic superiority, may increase the vigor of his criticisms of physical beauty, and may appear to his friends as a crank or a fanatic on the subject of physical development.

The teacher should not reason from one part of this pattern to the necessity of the other parts. A boy may be a fanatic about exercise for a great number of reasons and such an excessive emphasis does not necessitate a feeling of inferiority about beauty. Furthermore, a child may be sensitive about his looks and make a great number of adjustments to such an inferiority feeling. Compensation is only one possible reaction out of a great number of defenses. Excessive behavior of any sort suggests compensation but the rest of the pattern cannot be constructed from one isolated factor. With this warning we should be able to study in more detail some aspects of this whole mechanism.

Some of the factors which cause an inferiority feeling are: strutting siblings; favoritism by parents, nurses, teachers, or relatives; ridicule by comrades, who use such devices to subdue one whom they recognize as superior or to raise their own self-esteem; oversolicitous care by parents which deprives the child of ability to mix with other children and, at the same time, of the confidence to face life with independence; extreme reprimands for moral errors; the steady contemplation of unreasonably lofty ideals or standards of behavior; fear of the permanent effects of some action whose significance is not understood; or fear of the inability to win friends.

Physical defects are a prominent cause for feelings of inferiority. They are also excellent means for gaining special attentions and sympathy from other children and from adults. Some children learn to use such defects to exploit others, exaggerating their importance and devoting much energy to working their way through the world by imposing upon the kindness of others. They are likely to develop the philosophy of the parasite who contends that the world owes him a living and who becomes very much disgruntled if he is not given what he comes to believe is his due. In other words, the disability is accentuated and defended in adult terms but is, in reality, nothing more than the viewpoint of the child who feels that he is dependent upon his parents and who becomes quite hurt when they do not gratify his every whim. Such a person is a mendicant, but he hides his begging activities under the excuse of providing an opportunity to others to do the gracious thing.

To be sure, it is not only the person with the physical defect who develops the "gimme" complex. Sometimes it is the person who is so beautiful and so perfect that he

becomes the center of attention and everyone gives to him without stint. These donors think that they are manifesting generosity when they make such contributions to a particularly charming child, but they are merely teaching the child to obtain things by playing upon the sympathies of other persons.

Another complicating factor arises from the fact that a child may believe that he has some defect when, as a matter of fact, he has none. It is hard to conceive of a particularly bright child who has a firm conviction that he is intellectually inferior, of a strong child who is sure that he is weak, of a pretty child who thinks he is ugly, of a good child who thinks he is bad, or of a well-liked child who thinks that others dislike him. Nevertheless, such cases are very common and it is a mistake to assume that the child must always have an actual inferiority before he is able to develop an inferiority feeling. In fact, inferiority feelings which have no adequate physical or real background are more serious than those which are based on a real defect. If a child has a genuine defect he can be taught to face it squarely and to make some sort of adjustment, whereas an imagined deficiency results from a faulty self-estimation. In such instances, the teacher cannot attempt to lead the child to a direct and frank evaluation as she might do in the case of a child with a physical defect; instead she must discover what set of factors led the child to his false evaluation. Unless the real cause is discovered and corrected all attempts to help the child to correct his estimate of himself will probably be unsuccessful.

When the cause of the inferiority feeling is some real defect, it becomes the task of the teacher or counselor to assist the child in the development of some influence to

counterbalance the defect. This must be something which will increase the child's self-esteem. It should never be regarded as a second-rate substitute. It is a grave mistake to feel sorry for a child because he has some defect. He does not want sympathy; he wants esteem, and he wants to be sure that the esteem is not tempered with pity. If he writes a good theme, he wants the teacher to be pleased that it is a good theme because it is good and not because she feels she must make a generous gesture on account of his humped back. Nothing will please a child with a physical defect more than to be placed in situations where he can be on equal terms with the rest of the children. Recognize the value of the characteristics possessed by each child without continual comparisons, and a long step has been made toward the healthful adjustment of all the children.

Why should this be difficult? We can have in the household a fish, a cat, a canary, a dog, and a pony without continually calling attention to the fact that one can do something that the other cannot. We do not feel sorry for the canary because he cannot swim, for the cat because he cannot bark, for the pony because he cannot purr, or for the dog because we cannot ride on his back as we would on the back of the pony. It should not be so hard to honor each child for just what he is, without expecting of him performances that are impossible. In short, it is not the physical defect that makes his adjustment difficult, it is the fact that we impress upon the child the necessity for him to do something to make up for his defect. He should not be made to feel that he has to make up for anything. He should be taught to express the best that is in him and to gain pleasure from so doing. It is vicious to detract from that pleasure by odious com-

parisons with others who merely happen to be made over a different pattern.

It would be useless to attempt to enumerate all the types of compensation that are to be found; they are as varied as human life itself. Nevertheless, we are able to depict some examples of the most frequent varieties.

A frequent type of compensation is the balancing of a weakness or defect by a manifestation of superiority in its opposite. The small boy will strut and attempt to be impressive in his bearing, the unattractive girl will dress gaudily and use an excessive amount of cosmetics, the poor person will spend his money with imprudence, the boy with a weak physique will attempt to win recognition as an athlete, the big girl will try to be coy, the dull child will chatter in his attempt to appear smart, the selfish child will pretend to be extremely generous, or the one who has a temptation to steal will try to be scrupulously honest.

Sometimes such compensations are effective but may fail because opposites are not always of equal strength. A thimbleful of ink will discolor a quart of milk but a thimbleful of milk will not greatly reduce the blackness of a quart of ink. Compensation by the adoption of a quality which is the exact opposite of an unwanted trait is valuable only if the adopted trait is sufficiently potent to outweigh the undesirable characteristic. The use of a weak trait to overpower a strong trait makes one as ridiculous as though he were attempting to make ink into a pure white fluid by adding milk to it.

It is this attempt to balance a defect or undesirable trait with another which is incompetent to outweigh the defect which makes the child go to great extremes of behavior. His conduct becomes forced and unnatural be-

cause he is concerned with hiding something and does not obtain a clear picture of the significance of what he is doing.

Such methods of avoiding the admission of weakness involve strain upon the one who practices them continuously, for he is harassed by a continual fear lest observers see through his ruse. He becomes extremely self-critical and it may be easily observed that his conduct is forced and unnatural. Thus, the man who is forcing cordiality to cover his shyness never gives one the same impression as does one who is naturally cordial. One remarks upon the hearty response he receives at the hand of the dissimulator, but feels that such a reception lacks in candor — as though he were being secretly ridiculed. The hearty greeting of the politician often illustrates this. One can find no flaw in his blandishments except that they are not genuine. One cannot explain just why he thinks they are unreal but he makes his judgment upon trivial errors in emphasis; the heartiness is just a little overdone.

The teacher can often detect such overemphasis in very young children and she should recognize it at once as a compensation for the opposite of the thing overemphasized. The girl who runs at the sight of boys needs help in adjusting herself; for she is overdoing in an attempt to fight an unconscious tendency to associate with them. She needs to be taught to take a natural attitude. The boy who is meticulously and absurdly overhonest may be one who needs help in being honest. His exaggerated honesty may mean that he is having a struggle against temptations to dishonesty. The boy who is exceptionally rough needs assistance in his effort to become a real "man"; he is perhaps fighting a tendency to cowardice.

The teacher should not be deceived by the child who is

continually talking about his inferiority feelings. He may be extremely conceited and may be overdoing his attempts to be humble. One boy, for example, while taking an intelligence test prated continually about his lack of ability. He did well but apparently thought he was doing very poorly. When told he had done well, he replied, "You don't have to fool me to make me feel good. If I get it wrong, you just tell me. I won't care." This boy had no inferiority feeling. He delighted in his humility and demonstrated it at every opportunity.

It is rather common to find a child who is very annoying because of his excessive self-assurance, his extreme aggressiveness and his bullying attitude toward the other children. If such behavior is a compensation for the child's inability to make friends or for his inherent shyness, the increase in rigid discipline, which is so often used to combat such bullying, will be entirely futile. Such a child needs encouragement, an opportunity to win social favor, and enough social recognition to build up his self-confidence. A bully wants to engage in a fight because it is evidence that others respect his fighting ability. He knows that his fighting attitude is merely a false front to cover his cowardice. Build up self-confidence in place of cowardice and he will have no further need for pretending to be brave.

It is not necessary to compensate by selecting the exact opposite of the weakness which one is trying to hide. Any other trait may serve the purpose. Even though one may achieve a degree of excellence in the substitute trait, it often happens that the individual is not satisfied with ordinary success, he must excel in order to be doubly certain that his weakness will not be apparent either to himself or to others.



A good illustration of consoling one's self for inferiority in one particular by emphasizing excellence in another trait is the following case: After one of the writer's classes in which he had examined a patient, one of the members of the class came up and asked for an interview. He began with the statement that the class "was getting on his nerves." He said that when the patient was being shown he was seized with an ungovernable fear that he might break down as the patient had done. He could not produce a single symptom that the patient had shown. His history was entirely dissimilar and there was no apparent or logical reason why he should have had such a fear; but the fear was so real that he absented himself from the class on the next occasion, not being able to force himself to face a similar spell of fear. On prolonged analysis it developed that when a little boy this young man had been inferior physically. Other boys soon learned this, as well as that he was afraid of them, and would attack him in order to see him run and cry. The fear of his comrades became so keen that he would go to school before the rest of the boys were on the way and would stay to help the teacher until they were all well toward home. He would sneak off into the woods or side streets if he saw any of them coming, and developed the fear of them to such an extent that his life was a nightmare. More or less consciously he decided that he was going to put his comrades to shame by outshining them mentally. He had to admit his physical inferiority (at least he had not bravery or courage enough to try to demonstrate otherwise) so he decided to make up for it by being the leader of his classes. It happened that with all his study he was never quite able to head the class, although he came near the top. He had gone through high school and partly through college,

when he entered the class in abnormal psychology. He studied so hard that he overdid, and because of neglect of his body would have periods when he felt worn-out and inefficient. This simply aggravated his condition of fear, for he was banking on his mental achievements; and at any time when he felt mentally fatigued, he was filled with a fear that he would fail in his pet ambition. When he saw the patient in the classroom, this fear ripened; he was filled with terror at the thought that he might have a mental breakdown. Such a catastrophe would mean the capitulation of his last stronghold and he would have to admit defeat. His effort to console himself for a defect in one line by superiority in another had never been quite successful because he was unable to excel in the field he had chosen.

The fact that this fear of inferiority lay behind his ambition shunted off his energy and made him less able to shine in the mental sphere. Far from being an incentive to good work, this fear acted as a hindrance, and he described periods when he was filled with a nameless fear, the origin of which he was not aware of before the analysis. Several dreams and incidents show how this fear expressed itself. For example, after taking an examination he came running back half an hour later bringing his paper and saying that he had walked out of the room and forgotten to leave it. Such forgetfulness was more than accidental, for all the students placed their papers on a table as they left the room and he could not have failed to see it. It developed that the fear of not being the highest in the class actuated him; this fear made him forget to leave it and so he walked off with it in his hand.

On another occasion, he dreamed that he was back in grammar school attending a basketball game played by

two teams of girls. In the second half, one of the girls was injured; and, as there was no girl substitute, a boy was induced to put on the girl's uniform to finish the game. As this boy came out, the audience hissed and ridiculed him. Free association showed that this boy stood for himself and portrayed his desire to be physically strong by subjecting the other boy in his dream to the ridicule of being a "sissy."

The teacher in the elementary school where this trouble started should have detected the conflict of this boy. She did not do so. She was probably so flattered by the devotion of the boy and by the fact that he was a good student that she was not able to see any reason for his conduct but her own charming personality and her superior ability as a teacher. When a boy is so devoted to the teacher that he comes early and stays late and refuses to mix with the rest of the children the teacher should recognize that there is something wrong with the boy and try to rectify the trouble. There is nothing necessarily unwholesome in his desire to stay and help his teacher. It is in his avoidance of other children that the evidence of danger lies. If this boy whose career has just been described had been properly treated in his early school life, he would have been saved years of the most poignant misery.

One might think that to counterbalance an inferiority by superiority in another trait is a good adjustment. In some cases it may be, but there are numerous cases where this type of adjustment is not successful. One may reason with an individual that he would do well to ignore his defect and emphasize something in which he can shine, but the inferiority is there just the same and causes more or less anxiety to the possessor. The attempt to substitute mental superiority for physical inferiority, though it

might seem the substitution of a more valuable thing for a less valuable, is not always viewed that way by the individual concerned. We can illustrate this by a very interesting case where mental superiority gave no balm for physical weakness:

A boy of eleven, with an intelligence quotient of 148, was brought into a clinic by his mother with the report that he had tantrums when he was crossed, and would yell and scream till he got his own way. He staged these only at home and never at school, and never except in the presence of his mother, usually with the two other brothers present. He was physically weak, while his brother, two years his junior, was stronger. This brother could outrun him and beat him in all physical tests. The patient was very anxious to develop physically, and wanted to join the Junior Scouts and enter the junior Young Men's Christian Association physical gymnasium class so as to enable himself to excel physically. He was extremely jealous of the two other boys, although he outdid them mentally. The mental superiority meant nothing to him in comparison with his physical inferiority. He was a timid person — could not stand pain and was afraid of the dark. When, in his physical examination, a blood sample was taken, he yelled as a three-year-old child might have done. He used his tantrums to get the attention of his mother and thus he "put it over on" the other two boys.

He often dreamed about animals — wild ones, of which he was very much afraid. He dreamed that a burglar came into the house and killed the father, mother, and two brothers with a gun, and that he alone escaped. He dreamed that they had a servant who was bad and pierced him through the heart with a knife. These dreams ex-

pressed the dual nature of his conflict; the fear of physical disruption, with the wish to be superior.

All this was a definite reaction against a feeling of inferiority in connection with his physical make-up. His parents had tried their best to convince him that his mental superiority was much more to be desired than physical superiority, but their arguments did not impress him. He was jealous of the physical prowess of his brothers, and his whole ambition was to outshine them and get the whole of his mother's attention.

This case shows very clearly that boys and girls form their own standards of superiority and that these standards cannot be changed by any simple arguments on the part of elders. We may think that mental superiority is much more to be desired than physical strength; but, if a boy has set physical prowess as his *summum bonum* and is convinced that all the other boys surpass him physically, our arguments do not appeal to him. Mental excellence is too much in contrast and tends too much to make him feel even more inferior in the physical prowess he so much desires. If we are going to remedy a situation of this sort we need to help him to excel in something more in line with his ambition than mental acumen would be.

Each method of escaping the acknowledgment of an inferiority, therefore, only reminds the child of the defect he is trying to cover. The defect is a hobgoblin which he feels that he must bury. He soon realizes the futility of attempting to kill this defect by burying it under devices that distort reality, and the more he tries to cover it the greater his fear grows that some day it may come out and cause his discomfiture. To help him get to the bottom of his difficulty is of more value than to help him in the useless task of shoveling different species of con-

solation on the grave in which he strives to bury his hobgoblin.

The teacher should be on the lookout for the mechanism of compensation when dealing with misconduct. It is not well to conclude too quickly that a boy who does some bad act is a rascal; he may be having a terrific mental battle and need help more than he needs punishment. For example, a boy was brought to a clinic because he was dishonest, stole things, and was constantly getting into fights. He was a neat, active, clean-cut boy of fifteen, possibly a little small for his age. He was well behaved in the ward and showed no conduct disorders. He was friendly and co-operative, except that he showed some impatience under questioning and was loth at first to give his story. His father had deserted his mother before he was born. The patient knew nothing of the father — had never seen him. His only thought of his father was in relation to financial things. It would have been easier and more pleasant for him and his mother if she had not been obliged to work for a living. This attitude was related to the patient's difficulties, for he complained that he could not have things that other children had and therefore they would not play with him. He missed comradeship and had been very lonely. The beginning of his stealing was to give others candy so that they would associate with him. He had a marked complex related to the matter of development. He called himself a runt in comparison with others of his age, and he thought that he was undeveloped as to his genitals. When it was explained to him that the development of these organs was coincident with puberty and that this change might take place anywhere between the ages of fourteen and eighteen and be perfectly normal he was quick to say, "I am glad

to learn that." His fear of "not being a man" was also shown in his fear of being a sissy. When a smaller boy, he had attended the school in which his mother was teaching in the eighth grade. When he was old enough to be in his mother's room, she sent him to another school. Still the children there considered him "a teacher's pet" and would not play with him. He said, "They called me sissy — and I guess I was one." It was at this time that he began his stealing in order to be tough, and to buy things for the other children so as to get their admiration and companionship. Then he began quarreling and fighting in an attempt to be "manly." He could not get along with a girl cousin because she wanted him to attain a certain refinement of dress and manners which he thought would only make him more of a "sissy." As there were no boys in his neighborhood of his own age or older, he was forced to play with younger boys -- another indignity. He did not skate, because his ankles turned and the others made fun of him. He liked baseball but could not fit in well because he did not own the necessary equipment. Another thing that grated on him was that he did not like to fight. He tried to fight but did not like it, and so was even more firmly convinced that he was a "sissy." So he was impressed from every quarter with the fact that he lacked what he considered manly qualities.

This boy had tried his best to be tough in order to overcome his tendency to be a "sissy." The mother, teachers, and school authorities could see only the misconduct features and failed to ascertain why he did these things. He was being bad, although it was contrary to his disposition to act as he did. What greater reward could he receive than to be punished for his misconduct, since this punishment was public evidence that he was not a "sissy"?

Surely some other outlet for manly qualities could be found for such a boy than stealing and being tough.

Compensation is being improperly used when the child is excessive in his compensatory behavior, when he is self-conscious about his deficiency, when he is using some substitute behavior which is second-rate in his estimation, when he is compensating without awareness of what he is doing, or when he is driven with an urge to surpass everyone else in his achievements. When it has none of these characteristics it may be used with good results. We all have deficiencies; and the child must be taught to evaluate himself honestly, and to take a suitable place in the social order, without being driven by an abnormal urge to hide any trait or to outdo all of his fellows in some particular.

#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Excessive behavior of any sort suggests that the child is compensating and indicates the need for further study of the child.
2. Do not try to jump to conclusions as to the nature of the underlying cause from the appearance of the compensatory behavior.
3. Although a child may have some physical handicap it is possible to teach him to develop what capacities he has without any feeling of inferiority. Permit the handicapped child to be what he is and do not try to make him like the other children. He wants to be himself.
4. Do not attempt to help a compensating child by exposing the weakness he is trying to hide. Build up his self-confidence.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Show how the mechanism of compensation may enable a child to avoid a feeling of failure.
2. With what general aspects of compensation should the teacher be familiar?
3. Explain how the child may be taught to use compensation.
4. Name some of the factors which may cause inferiority feelings.
5. Explain the relation of physical defects to inferiority feelings.



6. Show how an inferiority feeling may develop in a child who has no actual defect.
7. Describe the form of compensation that is most frequently used.
8. What general rule can the teacher follow to eliminate the tendency of children to balance one trait against another?
9. What may be the significance of continual complaints by a child that he feels inferior?
10. When misconduct arises from the mechanism of compensation how should the unruly child be treated?

## CHAPTER XIV

### ARGUING AND EXCUSE-MAKING

Every child should be taught to distinguish clearly between debating and reasoning. A debate is a contest whose objective it is to win the argument or, at least, to persuade auditors to agree with the debater. Debating is a game which moves according to certain prescribed rules, makes use of rhetorical devices, gesticulation, or emotional expressions, and which may or may not adhere to the rules of logic. A good debater is willing to defend either side of a proposition, he cares little which is true; he can demonstrate his skill in persuasion just as well whether the proposition is true or false. To be sure, he cannot successfully debate upon an issue where there is no difference of opinion. He could not very well defend the proposition that two plus three equals five, nor that two plus three equals six. Consequently, the less the factual information about an issue the more it lends itself to successful debate. The debater's object is often to distort reason, therefore he does not want the reasons to be too apparent.

Reasoning, on the other hand, is concerned largely with clear thinking. Reasoning is the process by means of which the thinker attempts to arrive at the real truth. Although the debater uses "reasons" to support his arguments in order to convince others that he is right, he usually does not reach his conclusions as the result of the reasons he gives. He starts with his conclusions and introduces his reasons afterwards. Such an attempt to use reasons for the purpose of supporting a proposition leads

emotional eruption. The final act of the gentleman proves that the emotional set was dominant throughout.

This is the real test of rationalization. It matters not whether a man is arguing about gifts, religion, philosophy, science, literature, art, poetry, morals, or anything under the sun; if he keeps his poise throughout, and, if finally outdone, he placidly accepts the outcome of reason, he is not rationalizing, but reasoning. If, on the other hand, he shows great perturbation should he be defeated in the debate, and finally goes into a rage, one can be reasonably sure that all his arguments were simply attempts to convince himself and others of the truth of something that he wished to believe. "If one is in the right he does not need to get angry; if he is in the wrong he cannot afford to."

Since rationalization plays such a large part in our mental processes, it is important to understand just how our educational system is related to the fostering of this tendency. A little analysis will show that the training toward rationalization begins very early in a child's life, before he enters school, and is furthered by the training that he receives both at home and at school. The first step in his education in this direction is when he learns the difference between a plain lie and a glossed-over lie. He finds that if he is caught in a plain lie he is punished, while if he glosses it over in the form of an excuse, he is not so likely to be punished. An excuse, even if crude, is accepted where a lie is not. Hence he tells his lies with a sugar coating of excuse. The most acceptable excuse is the one that has a rational appearance, and so reason becomes a synonym for excuse. A girl is angry because she has to stay and help her mother with the dishes. Because she is angry she breaks a dish. Her mother begins to scold her, whereupon she gives a "reason." She had a cut on her

finger and accidentally hit it. The pain was so sharp that she could not help jumping and so dropped the dish. The girl knows that the real reason was that she was angry, but if her mother accepts her glossed-over lie why should she not tell her story in that way?

An excuse is also more acceptable than a direct lie for another reason. This is that it contains an element of truth. Probably the girl did hurt her finger; she is telling the truth even if she is telling only the smallest part. One can hide very important facts if he is only clever enough to place emphasis on some trivial circumstance.

It does not take a child long to learn proficiency in making excuses. He begins to search for excuses which will be accepted and develops adroitness in utilizing them when he is called upon to explain his acts. Suppose, for example, that a child hates school and arrives late because he has loitered along the way. His teacher demands an explanation of his tardiness but he does not dare tell her that he hates her and did not want to come. Instead, the "well-trained" youth tells her about the alarm clock which failed to go off, the late breakfast, the necessity of helping his sick mother with the dishes, and the like. All of these will be welcomed by smiles from his teacher, indicating to him that his excuses have been satisfactory and rewarding him for his distortion of the facts.

Another influence which teaches the child to rationalize is the method of "reasoning things out," with children employed by some mothers. If mothers were actually honest with their children in digging for the truth in any situation, the results would be most wholesome. Instead, the mother makes up her mind what she wants the child to do; he objects that he does not wish to do it; the mother presents "reasons" why he should do it; he counters with "reasons"

why he should not; and the result is an endurance contest to see which one can talk the longest and invent the most arguments.

Where there are legitimate reasons why a child should behave in a certain manner, it is wise to give them to him. He can certainly be told, for example, why he should be careful in crossing the street, why he should not play in the street, or why he should not throw stones. On the other hand, in many instances the only genuine reason why a child should do a certain act is to please the mother, and she is training her child badly when, instead of admitting this reason, she presents fictitious ones and begins an endurance contest in argumentation. She may win such a contest at first but the child is likely to learn quickly, and soon becomes more proficient than his mother and is able to out-talk her. Then she may complain that the child is stubborn and that he engages in endless argument.

Not only is a child taught, in this manner, how to argue but he is often taught which excuses are most effective. One boy of eight, whenever he was reprimanded by his teacher, would excuse himself by saying, "Well, you see, I am an only child and I have been greatly spoiled by my grandmother. I suppose that is why I am so bull-headed." Another twelve-year-old boy had learned the "poet's alibi." He complained that he was moody, and always explained away failures by saying that he had not been in the proper mood to study. He had to wait to be "inspired." Many children learn to use the excuse that they are sick, that they have a headache, or feel dizzy sensations. It does not take much imagination to suppose that they learned such excuses from some situation in the home.

Many children will get out of difficult situations by stating that they forgot, that other children are to blame,

that some other child did something worse than the act for which they are being scolded or punished, that they did not hear, and the like.

At this point adults are likely to make the mistake of attempting to prove to the child that his excuse is faulty. He retaliates either by insisting that his reason is a good one or by hunting for a better one. The adult tries to show that these are likewise faulty and thus the contest continues. The correct procedure would be to avoid being drawn into any such an argument. The excuse-making is a symptom that the child has some need for a defense and that he has taken up excuse-making in order to escape some difficulty. Learn what the difficulty is, help him to adjust to it and he will not need to resort to excuse-making and rationalization. Argue with him and you are training him to greater proficiency in rationalization in the same manner that his mother, or other person in the home, taught him to make excuses in the first place. If the arguing process is continued it may develop into a confirmed habit and pave the way for a pathological condition in adult life. The time to stop the process is early in childhood.

The process of rationalization is accentuated if children are taught, as they often are, that intellectual processes are infallible. In spite of all our efforts to convince ourselves as to the absolute integrity of intellectual processes, modern psychology has demonstrated that there is no part of human life which is so unstable and so little to be depended upon. If reason were fixed and dependable we should expect uniformity of thought, but this is not found. The only place where there is a semblance of uniformity is in the realm of science where different lines of evidence corroborate the thing which is accepted. When we come to

the rational interpretations of the findings of science, no two thinkers agree. Philosophy is an interesting gymnastic performance for those who need intellectual exercise, but no one expects to find two philosophies that harmonize, because, in spite of our preaching as to the integrity of human reason, we all know that this integrity is at the mercy of each individual thinker.

If reason indicates that certain lines of action are justified, then we are satisfied to perform those acts; whereas to perform the same acts as the result of some blind impulse would leave us humiliated. So, we try to go through life with a cold and intellectual attitude, and even over-balance ourselves in the extreme fight we make against any emotional influence.

There is a possibility of clear reasoning with no emotional bias. Such is the reasoning of the mathematician where the facts are not dealt with as concrete entities but as abstractions. It is difficult to lend any emotional bias to abstractions. On the other hand, a scientist may well be influenced by his desires in his scientific findings. Indeed, the very fact that he has given birth to a hypothesis biases him in favor of evidence which will support that hypothesis, and, in spite of himself, he will tend to be blinded to evidence opposing his theory. All scientists recognize this tendency and fight against it in themselves; furthermore, they encourage the repetition of their experiments by others who do not entertain the same personal bias toward their theories. It is when these indifferent or antagonistic investigators obtain the same findings that a scientific theory may be accepted with some confidence. Evidence which can only be discovered by those biased in favor of a theory is no evidence at all.

Political beliefs, religion, moral ideals, and philosophy

are all dominated by the process of rationalization. A man always insists that he adheres to a certain political party for certain good reasons which he can enumerate very eloquently. Trace the facts and you will find, as a rule, that he votes the way he does for some emotional reason and that the arguments have often been given him by some political leader. The same holds for other fields. How many people can give any good reason why they are Methodists rather than Baptists or Episcopalians rather than Catholics? They may have some superficial rationalizations, and probably will have, but, as a matter of fact, it will be found that they know practically nothing of the theology of any denomination. Our moral conduct likewise gives evidence of this process. Moral codes are established through the training we have received, and this training will hold just as any habit will hold; that is, until some stimulus to do something different becomes too strong. After we have side-stepped our moral customs in some slight manner it is remarkable how we can bring up all sorts of arguments to support our acts.

Thus, it is a familiar fact that people of otherwise irreproachable honesty will swindle the government or a railway company with untroubled equanimity. If they are taxed with the incongruity between their principles and their conduct, a varied crop of rationalizations will be immediately produced. They will point out that a company is not the same thing as an individual, that nobody really loses anything, that the fares or taxes are so inequitable that it is justifiable to evade them, and so on. The distinction between the real and apparent causes of mental processes is well illustrated in the advice given to the newly created judge: "Give your decision; it will probably be right. But do not give your reasons; they will almost certainly be wrong."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hart, Bernard, *The Psychology of Insanity*, Cambridge University Press, 1921.



Much of the apparently hopeless irrationality of the insane can be understood if we recognize the workings of the principle of rationalization. Some knowledge has been forced upon them which they were absolutely unwilling to admit. A woman who is well on in years and who has been highly repressed feels an attraction for a married man; a man feels that he is no longer able to hold the affections of his wife; a young girl feels an almost irresistible impulse to do some unconventional act. These new elements are so foreign to all the rest of their existences that they cannot admit them as part of themselves and so they explain them in some other ways than the true ones. They begin to search for evidence. They are blinded to all evidence that points to the truth — that these are parts of their personalities — so they seize on anything that shows such elements to be from some other source. Even if the evidence is thrust upon them they refuse to accept it; they cannot be convinced. "A man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still." These people (and we are all more or less this way) do not want to believe the truth, and they cannot be convinced.

The point to be remembered in this connection, is that the degree of fixity is the result of emotional stress. The judgment of these people seems to be highly distorted; they cannot reason correctly, according to our notion. The cause is that they cannot believe the truth without admitting a loss to their ego. Have you never taken part in an argument in which your opponent simply seemed too blind to see your point of view? You wondered at his lack of insight. The facts were, to you, beyond question. Have you ever noticed that in this same argument your opponent had the same opinion as to your lack of insight?

Emotion blinds insight and we are all more or less distorted in our outlook.

It is not everybody who carries this process of rationalization to an extreme degree; the extreme is reached only by the type of person who is peculiarly satisfied by reason, for rationalization is the stronghold of the intellectuals and does not appeal so strongly to the objective type of individual. Further, exaggerated rationalism can only satisfy the man who is a self-centered egotist. One has forced upon him the fact that in the realm of reason there are differences of opinion. The logical reaction to this recognition is to make room for views radically different from our own. This is easy enough where there is no vital interest in the point at issue. Let the issue relate closely to the desires of the subject and the case is quite different. We are likely to assert: "It matters not what the other man says, he is ignorant; he lacks insight; my view is right and I know it." So the one who gets satisfaction in this way is skeptical of the intellectual prowess of everyone but himself. No one, it seems, is intellectually honest but himself, and often the others have vile and improper motives behind their conduct and thoughts — a thing far from the individual filled with the delusional system — so he thinks.

The form of distortion which reasoning may undergo in rationalization is of two types. The first is known as the creation of *logic-tight compartments*, and the second is the *distortion of emphasis*.

In the logic-tight compartment method the individual has two separate systems of ideas which are in reality incompatible but which do not strike the individual as inharmonious. A man may have one system of ideas in regard to his politics, another in relation to his business,

another in relation to religion, and still another in regard to his family life. There is no reason why ideas in all of these different fields should not harmonize, but it often happens that they do not. To be entirely consistent in all branches of one's life would oftentimes be a hard task; one would have to study all the implications of his mental life in all its irradiations. Instead of doing this, one has a certain compartment which contains religious ideas; this compartment may be entirely separated from his political compartment so that in politics he is one personality and in church life he may be another. He changes from one to the other as readily as he changes his clothes.

We form these logic-tight compartments because we accept things on authority. We accept certain statements in one situation and then in another situation accept others. The difference in setting makes us fail to perceive the contradiction and the impossibility of accepting both. When a young child does see such an inconsistency he is usually told that he must take the word of the adult for it and that he will understand the whole thing later. This is bad pedagogy. A six-year-old boy came home from school one day and said that the teacher had told them something that was not so. She had told them that the earth was round, that it turned around like a ball. He said that it was not so because one would fall off when he was on the bottom and that the buildings would be upside down. Such arguments of the child should be met in a reasonable way. He should be shown by some simple experimental illustration that it is possible for the world to be round. He should not be asked to accept a statement because the teacher says it is so or because it is in a book if it seems untrue to him. The child should be taught to register his doubts in school, and the teacher should

either clear them up or leave the doubt there. If she insists that he must believe a thing whether he understands or not, she is paving the way for inconsistencies and logic-tight compartments and teaching him to use this inept method of meeting difficulties.

It should be indicated, however, that in one sense the use of logic-tight compartments is an advantage. The escape from one group of ideas to another is often in the nature of a relief. The business man puts off his business when he comes home and is quite a different individual. All day long he has been hard, close, and unrelenting in his methods. He comes home to his wife and children and laughs, romps, and acts like a boy; so that his business associates would not know him for the same man should they see him. Many a wife has wondered why her husband can never remember to bring home the thing that she asked him to buy on his way from business. It is because he does not think of the item during the day, for he is living in a different world where all the ideas are different; and it is only when he throws over this group of thoughts that his mind can revert to the affairs of home and, of course, if he does not make the complete shift from business to home until he gets to the home, he has forgotten the errand he was to perform.

The other form of rationalization, that of distortion of emphasis, is manifold in its forms. An attempt is made to harmonize divergent ideas, and in order to do this one group or other must be distorted. One wants to believe a certain thing. However, his personality will not let him believe it, or the facts as they are presented to him are contrary to the thing he would like to believe; so he distorts his reasoning processes. A boy who does not want to practice on the piano will find a thousand and one excuses

why he cannot practice just now; he will have to hoe the potatoes, he will have to mow the lawn, the pig pens need to be cleaned. Almost any dirty job is chosen rather than the detested music study. All the reasons seem perfectly valid to the shirker; they only seem out of proportion to the one who views them dispassionately. So the distortions of the one who wants to believe a certain thing seem to him to be sound and well proportioned.

Where rationalization goes to the extent of extreme distortion, it leads to an actual delusional system and the individual who possesses such a delusion is said to be *paranoid*. The extent to which this process goes varies greatly. In some cases the individual is able to uphold his position with great cleverness; all the internal evidence is sound and one is inclined to believe that the story is true. In most cases, however, the story has flaws in it. By internal evidence alone one is convinced that the person is deluded. Persons whose distortions are crude and illogical are usually included in the schizophrenic group and their condition is called *paranoid schizophrenia*.

The following case illustrates such a crude delusion: An unmarried woman of fifty-two, while working in a certain establishment, met casually a man who paid little attention to her. Some time after their meeting she was convinced that the man was following her. She says that one evening as she was standing on the street she saw this man going by with the chief of police and heard him ask the chief whether he might follow her. Since that time, she declares, he has done everything in his power to ruin her reputation, following her from town to town and annoying her in every way. As soon as this man arrives on the scene she notices a "change in the atmosphere" — people have no more to do with her. This idea has taken such root in

her mind that she will talk about nothing but this pursuit.

Working in league with the man, she says, is a woman for whom she (the patient) worked at one time. The pursuers travel in automobiles, changing the make in order to fool the patient. The reason given by the patient for this pursuit is that the woman pursuer is in love with the man and is afraid that the man is also interested in the patient; so she makes him follow the patient and torment her. She follows the trail to witness the torture and so assure herself that the man cares only for her and not for the patient.

Here is a queer distortion of rational processes. It started from the patient's hidden desire that the man should follow her. This desire she dared not admit to herself, so she expressed it as a fear that she was being followed by him. This fear she changed to an actual affirmation. Her wish to be pursued by the man is gratified by the idea that the entire time of these two people is taken up in a vain chase after her.

It is only one step beyond this to the actual false perception known as *hallucination*. In the case given above, the person does not actually perceive a man following when there is none in pursuit. She simply interprets every auto as the pursuing auto if it is identified by the peculiar feeling that she herself has. In the case of *hallucination*, a description of which follows, no man need be present to gratify this woman; she perceives her lover when there is no person present at all.

This woman when young was in love with a young man whom she left in a foreign country. After being in this country for some time she married and has had children. Some time ago she began to hear her old lover speaking to her. He told her that he would send her a ticket so that

she might return to him to be married. Later he told her that he was with her, and has been living as her husband all the past thirty-two years. From this moment she has seen her real husband "as a stranger," without taking any interest in him. Acting on the reality of the presence of her lover she told her husband that she could no longer live with him and forced him to leave the home. She then took care of the children herself. In all this the patient is extremely happy. She says that at times she is so happy that she can hardly control herself. She is in love with her childhood lover and is perfectly happy now that, in her hallucination, he has come to stay with her and her real husband has gone.

Here the desire actually changed reality as far as the woman was concerned; and she is perfectly happy living with a fictitious husband whom she likes rather than with her real husband, whom she does not like.

In other cases the delusion arises, not so much in the distortion of reality to satisfy a desire in the individual, as through the cowardly wish for someone else to take the blame. This reaction is extremely common among children and should never be encouraged, for when carried to an extreme it leads to *delusions of persecution*. A simple illustration will show how the reaction may manifest itself. A girl who was rather awkward spilled some water over the dining-room table while she was filling the glasses. Her mother came in at that moment and scolded her; to defend herself the girl cried out, "It was brother's fault; he was looking at me." The mother, thereupon, ceased scolding the girl and censured the boy very severely for looking at his sister. The mother, by accepting and acting on this absurd rationalization of the girl, was teaching her to rely upon delusional blaming of others in order to

defend herself. This does not mean that such training inevitably leads to a more serious disorder of the reasoning process; but it does mean that, if one wishes to guard against such possibilities, he should not teach children to blame others unjustly nor encourage them when they do so.

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### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. When a child does something because he enjoys it, do not teach him to give a rational explanation for his conduct. Above all do not make him say he is sorry for a thing when he is not.
2. Instill into the child the truth that reasoning is not infallible. Teach him the following: "Do not be too sure; there may be something you have overlooked or that you do not know."
3. Teach children to be consistent. When they bring up statements that do not harmonize, do not dismiss them with an authoritative statement of your own. This tends toward the development of logic-tight compartments. Let the dilemma remain rather than dispose of it by authority.
4. Encourage children to take the just blame for what they do rather than to make excuses which transfer the blame unfairly to accidents, false causes, or to other individuals.

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do we use reason to cover our emotions?
2. How is reason used to uphold one's ego?
3. Define rationalization.
4. Show how we learn to rationalize.
5. How can teaching be arranged to prevent rationalization?
6. Indicate the effect of rationalization on different forms of belief.
7. Differentiate lies, excuses, and reasons.
8. What is meant by logic-tight compartments?
9. How can rationalization lead to a paranoid delusion?
10. Show how an hallucination may develop from a rationalization.



## CHAPTER XV

### LIVING IN THE PAST

Conduct that may be particularly annoying to the teacher may be the wholesome attempt on the part of a child to adjust and may bespeak future mental soundness. On the other hand, conduct that may seem desirable at the moment may be paving the way to serious adult maladjustments.

It happens that one of the most pernicious mental diseases, known technically as *hebephrenic schizophrenia* or as *hebephrenic dementia præcox*, is the outgrowth of behavior patterns that, in and of themselves, appear innocent enough and even desirable. Unless the teacher is aware of the significance of the early conduct which characterizes children who later grow into this disease, she may miss opportunities to prevent the development of the disorder in children, and may even contribute to its growth.

In advanced form patients with this disease manifest a complete withdrawal from reality. They live within themselves, make practically no response to their environment, and spend their time in inert postures from which they cannot be drawn. They usually show the first marked symptoms in early life and, because of their complete withdrawal from active life, must be cared for in institutions. They become unresponsive to pain. They will respond to no questions or conversation and finally may become mute. They move about as mechanically as a robot and eventually settle into postures which

they may maintain for hours or even days at a time. They become inert physically, emotionally, and intellectually and exist merely because of the inertia of their vegetative processes. Physicians are not very hopeful for their recovery after they reach an advanced stage and they usually live for years in hospitals for mental diseases.

While it is possible that various factors may contribute to the development of this disorder, a study of the life histories of such patients reveals that they have a particular type of personality which shows itself in early childhood as a withdrawal from reality. This withdrawal becomes progressively more pronounced with years and seems to be the dominant factor in the disorder. On account of their complete withdrawal from social contacts (and they can be completely withdrawn even in the physical presence of other persons), their personalities cannot be changed and it is this personal rigidity which provides the dominant reason why they are incurable. Personality is changed largely because of external pressure upon the individual; and, if a child resists all influences, he becomes fixed as he is, or reverts to a more infantile state of existence.

In spite of this inelasticity, such patients were once young and plastic and, if the proper measures had been taken during their early years, they certainly could have been modified. They cannot be changed after they are old; but the lessons that can be learned from studying them should enable the teacher to modify the children who may now be in her care, and who may be headed toward this disorder, so that they may be directed toward a more wholesome development.

Patients who develop this disease usually appear to progress in a fairly normal manner until adolescence and

then manifest a characteristic emotional indifference to their surroundings which eventually grows into a progressive withdrawal from active life and an apparent regression to more and more childish levels of activity.

From this it can be inferred that they have adopted a defense mechanism of withdrawal. Life involves active adjustments, but they refuse to be active. Mental conflicts require fighting reactions, but they will not fight. Each individual must learn to become self-reliant, but these patients are as helpless and indifferent to their surroundings as a baby. The normal man is emotionally aroused when confronted with a difficulty, but these hebephrenics become so indifferent that it is impossible to stimulate them. The normal path of development is forward, but these people go backward; the future holds nothing for them because they live only in the past — if their negative existence can be called living.

The teacher should be alert to any indication that a child is afraid of the future, that he is desirous of remaining in his present condition, or that he would prefer to revert to a more infantile or a more helpless state. Children should have little need to live in the past. The major portion of their lives lies ahead and they gain little by going back to their brief past.

Let us examine some of the forms which symptoms of regression (the technical name for living in the past) may take in a young child. We cannot hope to give a complete survey of the manifestations of regression because they are extremely numerous and complex. The whole pattern of behavior for each child must be studied in order to get a comprehensive picture of the significance of his conduct. Those which we shall mention are merely suggestive.

It is normal for a child to desire to grow up, to be bigger and stronger than he is, and to be like some adult whom he very much admires. He will usually make a frank avowal of such desires but, whether he does or not, his conduct should indicate that he is looking ahead with eagerness and not with foreboding. The absence of such a forward-looking attitude may be a danger sign. It may indicate that he has been pampered and helped too much or that he has been warned too vigorously about the dangers of life, moral, economic, social, or physical.

A small child, when thwarted, screams, calls for help, or increases the force and variety of random activities in order to get rid of the opposition. The grown person encounters thwarting by a rational analysis of the opposition, and a systematized attempt to meet it adequately. For a grown person to yell, call for help, or to have a temper tantrum when thwarted may be a symptom of regression.

It may be normal for a baby to attempt to suck his thumb, but thumb-sucking is a regressive symptom in a grown boy or girl. A little boy exhibits himself by reciting, standing on his head, or some similar performance for the edification of "company," but an adult should have learned that he is not accepted as a friend because of silly exhibitions of himself. Persons who, while riding in a public conveyance, talk loudly in order to make themselves conspicuous are manifesting an infantile form of exhibitionism. Uncontrolled demonstrations of glee, horror, or of any other emotion in public are evidences of regression.

The lisping of girls or boys at the adolescent stage is reminiscent of the early attempts that the child makes to enunciate clearly. In the adolescent they indicate a re-

The observer is likely to be distracted from the true significance of the conduct by an attempt to evaluate the conduct itself. Some symptoms of regression are, as a matter of fact, considered desirable kinds of behavior, while some indicators of aggression are, from the observer's viewpoint, undesirable. We must learn to get beyond a judgment of the immediate behavior to an understanding of the direction that a child is taking. If he is still fighting and if he is still squarely facing his difficulties, he is in a wholesome condition, no matter how "bad" he may seem to be. If he is distorting his difficulties or evading them by attempting to live in the past, he is doing an unwholesome thing and the significance of such surrender should never be minimized.

Living in the past is excusable and may even be of value to an individual who is getting on in years. When a mature person begins to realize that his ambitions are not to be achieved as he had anticipated, when the greater portion of his life lies behind him and he begins to lose confidence in himself, he may need something to renew his courage and to give him strength to go ahead. A review of past successes may act as a stimulant under such circumstances. The discouraged person may review in his mind his past victories, he may gain some reassurance from the evidence that he did not permit himself to be beaten when he was thwarted in years gone by; why should he let the present difficulty "get him down" now? He may be pardoned if he distorts the past somewhat in order to gain the most invigoration from such a contemplation of what has gone by. In his review he minimizes the unpleasant factors and events and gives a little added weight to his victories. On the other hand, although regression may have some value for the discouraged adult,

the teacher should not, for that reason, condone or encourage similar behavior in children.

The tendency to distort the past is common to all of us. We like to tell "tall stories" and to sing songs which glorify the past, even though we know that we are practicing self-deceit in so doing.

An illustration of such valuable self-deception is the song of the "Old Oaken Bucket." When we were children we hated to get water with the old well-sweep. It hurt our backs; we skinned our knuckles; we almost froze in the winter. Heavy! The thing weighed a ton even when it was empty! We simply loathed the moss that added to its weight. We just ached to get away from the farm and to see life. The future distant scene was the thing that looked pleasant to us then. Now, after we have seen the rough part of life, the golden age lies in the past, because we have distorted the whole thing and see only the pleasant parts. Even the old heavy bucket that we hated so much looks pleasant in contrast to the hardships of the present. So, tired of life, and seeing nothing but trouble ahead, we go back to the "good old days" and sing:

How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood,  
When fond recollection presents them to view!  
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wildwood,  
And ev'ry loved spot which my infancy knew!  
The wide-spreading pond, and the mill that stood by it,  
The bridge and the rock where the cataract fell,  
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,  
And e'en the rude bucket that hung in the well —

The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,  
The moss-covered bucket that hung in the well.

This song typifies the atmosphere which pervades class reunions, homecomings, vacations to the scenes of child-

hood, and Christmas and other holiday celebrations. The sedate banker will get away from business to vacation in some solitary spot and go unwashed and unshaved for weeks, eating bad food and living in the most primitive style, as a temporary release from the strain of keeping up appearances in the business world. Such lapses from the decorum of civilized life renew the vitality and regenerate the courage which is necessary to enable us to carry on our ordinary occupations. Vacations, holidays, and returns to primitive living are all forms of regression which are of value for normal mature persons.

Sporadic regression is not harmful, it may even be helpful, but when a child regresses frequently he is developing a habit that may have extremely pernicious consequences. It is the habit aspect of regression which is bad, the habit of living in the past instead of adjusting to the present.

Since regression often begins at the age of adolescence, the teacher should be on the lookout for first signs. Early discovery is especially important in this disorder on account of the fact that in later stages the patient may become so inaccessible that no one can do anything for him.

(In the mildest type of schizophrenia known as *simple schizophrenia*, the onset is hard to discern. The symptoms may appear gradually in a boy or girl who has been getting on satisfactorily in school. At first there is seen a lack of interest in things; the child ceases to go out and associates less and less with the other children. There comes over him a general listless, apparently lazy and tired-out attitude toward life. Lessons are neglected and the child begins to fail in his studies. Often he develops irritability and as a result may have transitory periods

of excitement. Sometimes peculiarities of conduct and strange mannerisms develop, such as muscular tensions or peculiar movements of various sorts."

Even if this form does not progress into more severe forms, the adult that is produced finds it very difficult to adapt himself to life. It is quite likely that a great many criminals, hoboes, prostitutes, pseudo-geniuses, cranks, and eccentrics of various types are cases of permanent and non-progressive simple schizophrenia.

If taken in time these cases can often be guided over the difficult period. For example, an adolescent boy who had been doing good work suddenly developed the following peculiarities. He continually kept a glove on his right hand, in school and out of school. He wore his overcoat in the schoolroom regardless of the temperature of the room. The teacher told him several times to take off his glove and overcoat. He was always very obedient but in a few minutes would have them back on. In addition he would always select a seat away from the rest of the boys and would not sit anywhere near the girls if he could possibly avoid it. This boy had been perfectly normal to all appearances before these peculiarities developed.

The principal of the school discovered this case and, by securing the boy's confidence, learned the following facts: The boy's father had gotten into a rather serious scrape which had brought some unpleasant notoriety. This the boy felt very keenly since he was very proud of his father. At this same time a girl baby had been born into his home, a thing that the boy did not like at all. He felt he had lost his prestige in the home, the baby having usurped his place; and he felt that he was an outcast with other boys on account of his father. The glove on his



hand was to keep himself in constant preparation for a fight; he would not fight with a bare fist. The overcoat was to cover his poor clothes. As a matter of fact, his clothes were not poor; he was very well dressed. He had simply attached his feeling of shame to his clothes and the covering of these with his overcoat represented covering all the shameful things that had come into his life. He felt that all the boys were his enemies and so he would not sit near them and he hated all girls because the baby was a girl. The principal very tactfully drew all this from the boy and then discussed the whole situation with him with equal tact; and in a few days the boy was adjusted and as normal as ever. What would have happened had he not been thus treated no one can tell. He made his first move away from reality, was detected, and brought back at once. The writer believes that by the work of this principal, which consumed only about two hours' time, this boy was saved from a serious maladjustment.

An illustration may show how the simpler forms of regression may progress into extreme symptoms. There is a young man now in the helpless condition of hebephrenic schizophrenia who has gone through successive stages before he finally ended where he is, stages which it may be instructive to trace. As a little boy his mother took unusual care of him. He was kept spotlessly clean, he was not permitted to play with other children until the mother was certain that their influence would be of the best, he was encouraged to read and to study when he was very little, and he learned always to be polite to visitors. He made remarkable progress in all directions and the mother, certain that she was entrusted with a genius, redoubled her efforts to bring out the best in him. He developed a self-conscious, affected manner of speak-

ing which aroused the ironical teasing of all his classmates, he was always ready to recite when the others failed, and he was always telling other children of their faults. All these behavior patterns were quite gratifying to his mother, who interpreted them to mean that her boy was making more rapid progress than the other children of his age.

Could he be said to be regressing? At least, he was acting in a manner that made him withdraw from normal associations with the other children and later events proved that he was truly regressing. His apparent progress was merely a disguise to hide the fact that his entire life was centered in his mother. She had engulfed his every thought and action and he had never been weaned from her. Her approval outweighed the scorn of all his comrades. He could not play with them but he could read the books that his mother selected for him. It was more important to please her than to please anyone else in the universe.

This is not progress, it is a prolongation of infantile helplessness. Furthermore, his mother continued her supervision beyond the home. If he visited a neighbor, that neighbor was instructed to be certain that any water that might be given him had been sterilized, that he be given no candy or cookies, that he be guarded from any rough behavior or ill-chosen words on the part of the other children.

Furthermore, he was told of the wickedness of the world. He was warned against the evils of drinking, smoking, playing billiards, throwing dice, playing cards, dancing, seeing any but the most elevating motion pictures, joining secret societies, and particularly was he told of the dangers of associating with girls. His mother made it clear

that women were divided into two classes; the first class included his mother and represented all that was good and noble in life, the other embraced all the rest of woman-kind and all of these were vicious and were intent on bringing injury to her son. To be sure, she did not state the situation in these words but she made sure that her boy gained the impression clearly and made certain that he acted accordingly.

Her instructions about girls began with a scolding because he walked along the street with a girl at the tender age of seven, and was followed by a temper tantrum by her when she found in his possession the picture of a movie actress, with solemn warnings when she thought he looked too intently at a little girl, with lurid stories of the infections that one subjected himself to if he so much as touched a little girl (a fate which was almost sure to follow if he kissed anyone but his mother), and solemn vows that she would always love him, and tearful hopes that he would never leave her.

Physically he grew to manhood, intellectually he became brilliant, but emotionally he never advanced beyond the preadolescent stage. He progressed as far as the second year in college when he broke completely and became totally incoherent in his speech, indifferent to everything around him, and had to be taken to a hospital for mental diseases, where he has been for ten years and where he will probably spend the rest of his life.

He did not grow up emotionally because he did not dare to do so after his mother had trained him as she had. His whole life centered in her. He lived and breathed for her, he worked for her, he studied for her, and only her could he love. Why could he not go on indefinitely even if he was thus shackled by her? Why did he need to have

a mental break? Other boys have remained with their mothers throughout life and have seemed to make a fair adjustment. He could have if his mother had been able to teach him to eradicate every adult emotion. In spite of her teachings he did have adult impulses and it was the conflict between these and his love for his mother that caused the final disruption. He could love only his mother, but he dared not love her with an adult love. He had to keep his emotions infantile in order to maintain his moral integrity and hence he disintegrated and regressed to emotional immaturity. In this emotional regression he carried with him all the other aspects of his life.

If, as these cases tend to show, the final turning in on one's self is the sequel of a long process of such reactions, it should be possible for the teacher to detect children who have this tendency in its incipient stages. That this method of meeting difficulties is quite common is shown by the fact that nearly one-third of the cases of insanity are of the introvertive type; hence almost every teacher has had to deal with pupils of this type at some time or other. If introverts are to avoid serious mental abnormalities, help must come in the early stages; for in later stages they are hopeless, because they are inaccessible. You cannot help a person who will not respond at all, one from whom you can get no emotional reaction of any sort.

The teacher or parent is very easily misled when she gets a shut-in individual. Since these persons pay little attention to the environment they have, of course, a negative type of virtue — they never do anything noticeably wrong, never get into trouble. Their apathy or lack of attention, if it is serious enough to retard them in school work, is attributed to intellectual defect; but a teacher

who has her eyes trained to the problem can easily distinguish the difference, apparent mostly in the emotional tone. A feeble-minded person will usually make an adequate emotional reaction — he is sure to do so if the occasion is not intellectually above him. The shut-in person will not make an adequate emotional reaction.

In order to give early attention to cases of this type the following characterization of the introvertive type of personality may be of help:

1. *The introvert is likely to be of the goody-goody type.* As a child he will keep his clothes clean longer than the other children. He does not have to be punished; he never does anything wrong. In school he is a model as far as conduct goes.

2. *He will seldom fight.* He shows none of what boys call "pep." He will stand an inordinate amount of abuse with no retaliation.

3. *He is of a seclusive disposition.* He prefers to play and work alone. He can be found by himself when the rest are all heartily entering into some community activity.

4. *He takes little or no interest in the ordinary affairs of life.* He would prefer to read than go to a circus, even at the age when a circus is most likely to make its appeal.

5. *He is likely to be careless about his person.* This is not the carelessness of the live boy who delights in getting mussed up. The introvert has not initiative enough to get dirty and likewise has not enough spirit to take any interest in making himself neat.

6. *He is very likely to have queer emotional reactions.* On occasions when most of the children will laugh he will show no inclination to do so; and, on the other hand, will show emotional reactions when there is nothing in the situation to produce them. In other words, his emotions

are reactions to his own thoughts in which he is buried, and not to the environment.'\*

\* 'What can a teacher do when she encounters a child who shows regression symptoms? The general purpose of treatment will be clear if it is kept in mind that the tendency to regress is a habit. The question to be answered is, what is a good substitute for the habit of living in the past? Obviously, the best substitute is the habit of living objectively in the present with an outlook toward the future. If a child is dwelling upon his past victories, do not minimize them; remember that he is dwelling on them because he needs encouragement. Use the courage derived from a look at some past success to enable him to face the present aggressively and to plan for future victories. ~  
~ Furthermore, it is wise to discover what elements in his situation have contributed to his retiring attitude. If he has been raised by a well-intentioned but dominant mother or father, see that he gets repeated opportunities to act independently. Such training must come from some person other than the one who has produced the inhibitory influences. Oftentimes, a mother or father of superabundant energy and extreme aggressiveness will realize that they are, by their very presence, making any spontaneity on the part of their child impossible. They then tell the child to be independent and even try to supervise his training in independence. This merely aggravates the situation. It is often absolutely essential that a child be removed from the influence of the dominating personality and placed where he can be free to develop his independence. If he cannot be removed completely, it may be possible to decrease the proportion of time that he must spend under the watchful eye of the dominant taskmaster) ~  
(Sometimes it will help to give the child a taste of suc-

cess in a performance that depends wholly upon physical skill. It often happens that a weak physique contributes strongly to the habit of regression. The child is not strong enough to compete in games and retires to himself. A weak body does not necessarily lead to regression but a strong physique makes it easier to overcome the regressive habit. The regressive individual often shows his retiring attitude in his voice. The aggressive individual usually has a commanding voice. Teach the child who appears timid how to use his voice effectively, and the effect of a strong and positive voice upon other children will in turn build self-confidence in the child who speaks effectively.

Above all, such training should not make the child more self-conscious. The regressive child is already too serious about himself and all his training should be of the sort to take him out of himself, to make him more objective, and to teach him to enjoy being spontaneous. Consequently, it must be pursued by indirect methods. Never tell a child that he is now taking training in changing his attitude or philosophy of life. Enlist him in new games in such a manner that he knows nothing more about what is happening than that he is having a good time. Once he learns to enjoy life and to enjoy being active, alert, and objective, he will find the old habits of retiring into himself and living in the past have disappeared.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Convince the child that the future holds better things in store than the past. This can be done by setting certain objectives not too far in the future and directing keen anticipation toward them. After one such goal has been reached, immediately set another. Do not rest at one goal too long or there will come a tendency to fix it too strongly or to revert to some previous one.

2. Give the child a chance to express his childhood tendencies in an adult form which is socially approved. The child will not want to regress if he is given an adequate outlet. Regression is the result of too severe repression with no substitute outlet.

3. Develop the child's appreciation of life. As life becomes more complex the pleasures increase along with the difficulties. Teach him to know that the added pleasures which complexity affords, will compensate for its increasing difficulties. Then he will not long for the simple life.

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe some of the forms of behavior of a person with hebephrenic schizophrenia.

2. What significance does this disease have for teachers?

3. What is the characteristic defense mechanism of one who regresses?

4. Describe some of the forms that regression takes in a young child.

5. Describe some of the influences that tend to make a child regress.

6. Why should the transient regressions of a child be infrequent?

7. Of what value is regression to mature individuals?

8. Give some instances of normal regression.

9. What is the essential difference between a wholesome regression and an unwholesome one?

10. Enumerate the different methods that might be used to re-educate a person who shows regressive tendencies.



## CHAPTER XVI

### SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENTS

One of the most significant signs of maladjustment in a child is his failure to get along with other children. Social disharmony may have two aspects. The child's behavior toward others may be faulty in that he may dislike other children, he may be indifferent to them, or he may do unkind things to them. On the other hand, their behavior toward him may be the dominant feature in that they may express a dislike for him, they may avoid him, or they may treat him unkindly. In many cases the disharmony may be mutual.

The importance of social training is almost universally recognized and the teaching of social adjustments is an essential part of any school program. While many children will make fair social adjustments even though crude methods are used in teaching them, the real test of any program of social education is measured by its ability to handle the unusual child. When some child does not respond to social training the usual plan is to redouble efforts along the customary lines and, if the child does not respond favorably to this increased effort, he is usually given up as a queer individual for whom nothing can be done. Persistent failure to adjust to other children should be regarded as a symptom of some more deep-seated difficulty and, instead of redoubling efforts to make him adjust, the essential factors behind his failure should be analyzed and treated. If the basic difficulty is resolved the child usually makes his social ad-

justments without much specific attention from supervisors.

The poorest method of dealing with the socially maladjusted child is to lecture him upon the necessity of making friends, pointing out to him his failure, and admonishing him to do better in the future. Such procedures merely make him so self-conscious in his dealings with others that he fails even more strikingly than he did before.

Many children feel only too keenly their lack of friends but do not know what to do about it. One child will feel that if he could only make new acquaintances he could do better, so he develops the ambition to go off to a different school. Another will think that friends have to be bought by gifts and kindness, so he buys elaborate presents for his teacher and friends, even going so far as to steal the money to enable him to do so. Another will bully the younger children in order to make them play with him. Another will tell tales of his own exploits or attempt to demonstrate his prowess in order to impress the others. Still others, finding all normal methods ineffective, resort to revenge upon those whose favors they have vainly courted and will play mean tricks upon them.

Most of this behavior is misunderstood by teachers because they fail to discern the motives behind it. They report that a certain child hates other children whereas, if the truth were known, he has an intense hunger for friends without adequate knowledge of human nature or the necessary skill to deal with other children in such a manner as to win friends.

Our thinking on this subject will be clarified if we keep before us the fact that social adjustments are learned and that failure indicates learning which is faulty at some point. We should also not ignore the fact that a great

many factors enter into social adjustments. Some instances of friction may be caused by relatively insignificant personal habits that the child has developed. Some may be due to accidental or temporary antagonisms. Others may be due to the fact that a child has been limited in the possibilities of getting acquainted with children. Still others may be due to having learned a pronounced feeling of hatred for other children. It should be clear that these various situations vary in significance and must be treated quite differently. For this reason, the teacher or mother should avoid jumping at conclusions as soon as it is found that the child is not adjusting well to other children. What appears, at first glance, to be a very serious social rupture may be an insignificant quarrel and, on the other hand, some apparently trivial rupture may be the expression of deep-seated antagonisms which require the most adroit handling. If adults are to be of the most service in this connection, they themselves must have a keen social sense, and must have learned to handle delicate social problems with skill and care. A bungling adult can do much to accentuate or make permanent a minor social maladjustment.

While social adjustments are exceedingly complex, there are certain principles that a child must learn and it may be well to review these and to indicate the manner of their learning. Let us preface this discussion with the warning that it does not solve the problem of social learning to teach a child how to state the principles of social behavior. He must learn them by experience so that they become a part of his customary behavior. There are too many persons who cover up the hate they feel for others by a glib recital of the Golden Rule.

The newborn child is as innocent of social amenities as

he is of a knowledge of language. He no more loves or hates other persons than he appreciates the subtleties of an excellent painting or a symphony. He can no more be called selfish or altruistic than he can be called moral or immoral. He is merely unlearned in all these respects.

His first experiences with other persons are usually related to their function in providing him with food and removing physical discomforts. Through repeated experiences he learns to connect the relief from discomfort with the presence and the activities of his mother or nurse. He learns that he cannot rid himself of hunger and pain without them. They become an essential part of his existence and he learns that he cannot do without them. With more extended experience this early learning is strengthened and he clings with great tenacity to those who have been of service to him. In other words, the attachment of a child to other members of society is built upon his need for their care and help. If we can call this early behavior on the child's part by the name of love (as most people do call it), his love is a manifestation of his dependence upon others. To remove the object of his affections is to deprive him of some necessity of life.

Unfortunately, this is as far as the social development of some persons goes. They go through life expecting others to love them, that is, to minister to their needs; and any affection that they may have for those who serve them is the selfish demand for more. They cannot conceive of doing more for others than they have done for their own mother. All that they think is necessary is for them to smile in appreciation or to give verbal thanks. They believe it is a favor to others to permit them to bask in the sunshine of their presence and nothing is too much to expect from others as a return for such a favor. They become

the parasites who play upon the feelings of all those who have a mothering or a fathering tendency, and these latter gain so much comfort from the enjoyment of serving that they never seem to realize that they are being exploited.

In early years this parasitical behavior is disguised under what is usually described as a very gracious type of personality. The child has learned how to get the slavish reactions from others by the lavish use of smiles and expressions of gratitude. It is especially likely to become pronounced in a child who is particularly good looking. For some strange reason, both children and adults (but mostly adults) think that they have been done a great favor when a child of pleasing appearance shows marked attention to them or smiles graciously, and they will pay any price to get such attentions. They do not realize that they are merely teaching the child to continue childish tricks which should be outgrown. Witness how men who should have more intelligence will be flattered beyond measure by the obviously shallow smiles and blandishments of a well-dressed and beautiful woman and will spend any amount of money upon her and be pleased that they have had the privilege of being thus exploited. Or again, a prominent movie actor or radio singer will be flooded with offers of marriage by thousands of women who would think that they were being highly honored should their idol so much as smile at them.

If children who have been trained in this fashion find some host upon whom to exercise their parasitical behavior, they may pass through life with no particular struggle; but the dangers of such a set of habits are obvious and no teacher should encourage any such limitation of social development.

An infant must be dependent upon others because he is helpless but it should be apparent that a grown person who maintains this dependence is still in the infant stage of social development. To transfer one's parasitical connection from one's mother to another host is certainly not the end and aim of social development. Every individual should outgrow the need for dependence upon any person, be it his mother or a mother substitute.

Growth into independence is, nevertheless, merely the negative aspect of social development. Should we stop at this point, the result would be a completely unsocial attitude. Having outgrown the need for help from others, we could get along without them, and social contacts would mean no more than contacts with the mechanical devices that make civilization what it is. People, busses, electric lights, bathtubs, and heating devices would all be in the same category. They would be useful for our comfort but have no further function or value. We would value other persons so long as they served us and would discard them when they were no longer of any value. Love would be a form of barter.

That children learn very early the notion that social relations are to be considered as a form of exchange is illustrated by the following episode. A little child of three was cared for by a maid who dressed her in the mornings, fed her, took her for walks, and put her to bed at night. One day her mother asked her to do something which she did not want to do. In reply to this demand from her mother she replied, "Do you get me up in the morning and dress me?" As much as to say, "I owe you nothing because you do nothing for me."

If such an attitude persists into adult life it becomes almost as pernicious as the attitude of the parasite. We

cannot consider a person to be socially mature if his whole aim is to get all he can out of other persons and to give as little as possible in return. If we emphasize this barter aspect of social life we are making little politicians of our children, teaching them tricks to win the good will of others, paying them as long as they are useful but carefully refraining from any emotional response to anything that they may do for us or to us. For persons trained in this manner, getting along with people depends upon the learning of a set of social rules, the motive being purely selfish. Persons who develop such patterns of behavior usually have an attitude which has been described as an introvertive attitude. They have withdrawn emotionally from other persons, they have become oriented wholly to themselves. If you have become such an individual, other persons are necessary adjuncts to a comfortable life but, apart from this use, they have no value. If a person is unable to serve you, he is discarded as you would discard a broken-down car. Your only emotional reaction to one who is of value to you is the same sort of thrill you get from the purring of the motor in your new car.

The socially adjusted person retains some of the need for others that he had in infancy, he knows the principles of social interaction well enough to elicit co-operation from others and to gain some advantages from his relations with them. In addition, however, he learns to gain much satisfaction from the feeling that others need him, that he can be of service to them, that they cannot well get along without him.

This type of socialization has its beginning in sensitivity to the wants and needs of others. It is illustrated in the way a little girl went about selecting a Christmas present for her father. In reply to a question from her mother as

to what she would get her father she answered: "Well, I don't know. He has shirts. He has a suit. He has all the ties he wants. I heard him say that he could never find his ties. I wonder if he would like one of those racks for holding ties that I saw the other day?" This certainly indicates a more socialized attitude than is manifested when a child thinks of getting her father a toy or something that she herself would like. One cannot be of value to others until he becomes sensitive to their wants.

Nothing gives a truly socialized person more satisfaction than the conviction that he is necessary to the happiness of others. This development should normally begin in childhood and should become part of an increasing number of situations as the child grows older. In the socially mature individual the feeling that one is needed largely supplants the feeling that one needs others. Nothing is more painful to the mature man than the feeling that no one needs him.

The problem that confronts the teacher and mother is how this learning may be accomplished. We have discovered from clinical studies that no child feels more alone in the world than one who happens to have a particularly efficient mother, a mother who is wholly self-reliant, and who does everything for her child even before he has a chance to express his need for it. The way for a child to develop the sense of being necessary in life is to have someone in the home who does need him. To be sure, this need is not enough. The needs of others can be presented to him in such a manner as to make him resist helping them. He may feel that he is being imposed upon. It takes a skillful teacher to impress the child with the fact that he is necessary and, at the same time, that his assistance is purely a voluntary affair on his part. It is



only when it is voluntary that he gains the satisfaction from contributing his services. One gains no satisfaction from imposed services but he gains much pleasure from the assurance that what he has done has been upon a voluntary basis and that it was sorely needed too. He feels that he was necessary for the happiness of someone and obtains a feeling of nobility for having met the need.

With this outline of the way in which social maturity is to be attained, we can devote our attention to some of the difficulties which may be encountered along the way, how they may manifest themselves in children, and what can be done about them.

The schoolroom cannot be the ideal place for social development that it should be unless the teacher herself is socially mature. The teacher is often placed in a situation where social adjustments outside the school are particularly difficult. The residents of the community may be snobbish or may be of inferior quality. They may have such unbending notions of social behavior as to make it very difficult for the teacher to take part in the community social life. In the classroom, however, she can manifest her true social self. Her degree of social maturity can be measured largely by her attitudes. If she is largely self-centered and teaches with the purpose of proving that she is a good teacher, she will be likely to assume an air of lordly dignity which will produce strain. Such a teacher will try to get rid of some child with a handicap instead of welcoming the chance to be of service to one who has a particular need. She will take delight in the bright student who is able to make a good impression upon those who judge the quality of her teaching. She will be more engrossed in teaching subject matter than in teaching children. She will not know how to motivate children and

may even think that motivation is not one of her duties. The only child who remains normal with such a teacher is the one who is tolerant enough to make allowances for her. Children have often been heard to say about their teacher: "Oh, Miss —— doesn't like us, she doesn't think about anyone but herself." If a child can say this with a shrug of indifference or with some degree of sympathy for the unfortunate teacher, the child may remain wholesome in spite of her influence. It is the child who is not too well prepared for such a situation who will be injured by it. Since teachers manifest all degrees of social maturity, it is well that a child be exposed to a number of different teachers through his school career. He thus learns to deal with various types of persons and gains some social insight.

In dealing with socially maladjusted children, each child must be studied individually and treated according to the analysis of causes which seem to operate in his particular case. After a diagnosis has been made it should be regarded as a scientific hypothesis, subject to verification or refutation. Treatment should be applied which would logically be effective if the case is correctly judged. If the treatment is not effective a further study should be made and other diagnoses formulated. For a teacher to say that a child does not respond to her treatment is merely to say that either the diagnosis or treatment is in error. Failure to respond is never to be blamed on the child.

There is the child who is socially maladjusted because he is so thoroughly satisfied with himself that he does not try to make friends and who, with his supercilious airs, repels those who might be willing to associate with him. Care must be taken to distinguish children who have not advanced beyond the stage of self-love and those who

have been thwarted in some more mature social situations and who revert to self-love as an escape from social failure. In the first type of case, remedial work consists in providing a social situation where the child can learn to experience the joy of being needed by others instead of being satisfied with being waited upon. In the second type of case, the cause for the regression should be ascertained and removed. When a child does not respond to social training the teacher may well suspect regression.

Egocentricity is normal in children but should be gradually replaced by interest in others. Failure to make this transition is often evidenced by exhibitionistic behavior. We may include in this category the "perfect lady" type of girl who will work only when she can show off to the other children. One nine-year-old girl of this type had come from a cultured home where she had been exploited by a doting mother and had been used by a progressive teacher to demonstrate to women's clubs the latest pedagogical devices. All this convinced her that she was better than the other children and she could not refrain from showing them how she felt. The children retaliated by shunning her and, when we found her, she was beginning to feel her isolation. This hunger on her part was just the necessary factor to make effective the process of social education. She welcomed instruction in methods for gaining friends.

Very often a mistake is made in treating self-centered children. If they have too lofty an opinion of themselves the assumption is made that they should be brought to a lower level more in keeping with their ability. Attempts to carry out such a purpose usually bring out further exhibitions on the part of the child to gain the plaudits of his comrades and the situation becomes more com-

plicated. Instead of attempting to humiliate the self-centered egoist, he should be provided with a more satisfactory method to gratify his desire for esteem. A sense of his own importance which is based on the fact that he fits into a vital need of others, either of one person or of a group, will soon expel the hunger which he has come to gratify by silly exhibitionistic behavior.

As an illustration of the way such treatment should be applied let us examine the method used, quite by accident, by one mother. She had a daughter of about twelve years of age who had been taught by relatives and friends to strut in a most objectionable fashion. She was completely in love with herself, and had developed many superficial affectations of manner and speech. She assumed that everything that she did was right and looked with disdain upon other children. She could not be induced to take any part in household activities, thinking that her mission was to be a "lady" and to sit in complacent idleness. The mother had "unselfishly" catered to all of her daughter's whims and had thus unwittingly accentuated her arrogance. It seemed as though she would never advance beyond the stage of self-love. Then an accident changed the entire situation. Her mother became critically ill, her father had his salary reduced and, with the added expense caused by the illness of the mother, could not afford to employ a servant. The girl met the challenge and studied at school with sufficient energy so that she could devote all of her time outside of school hours to taking care of her mother and keeping house for her father. Neighbors were inclined to feel sorry for her because she had to work so hard, but she became an entirely changed personality. The place of the self-centered little prig had been taken by an efficient, generous, and happy

girl. It was just what she had needed to make her socially mature. She had learned the pleasure of being needed by someone else.

After several months the mother recovered and her first impulse was to relieve her child completely of the housework so as to make up to her for her generosity and kindness during her illness. Fortunately, she restrained this first impulse and her better judgment led her to see the significance of what had happened to her daughter. She relieved her child of some of the drudgery but made certain that she retained the satisfaction of knowing that she was necessary to the comfort and happiness of the other members of the family.

The way to overcome snobbery is to give the person who manifests it a genuine sense of his importance by making him necessary to the welfare of others. It never pays to try to force upon him a feeling of his own unworthiness.

A child's social development may be hampered because he has learned to become too dependent upon one person, because he has become too deeply attached to some one person, or because he idealizes too highly one specific individual. There is often a tendency to overlook, if not to encourage, narrowness in social development. If a child loves deeply one individual to the exclusion of all others, it is just as much a deficiency as though he were to learn thoroughly one process, such as long division, and refuse to learn anything else. The principle is the same whether the loved one is mother, father, brother, sister, nurse, or someone outside the home circle. The most frequent variety of narrowness of social life is when a child is attached to his mother or father too strongly. Such attachments are usually fostered by the parent who has a conscious or

unconscious desire to keep the child in emotional servitude because of the satisfaction the parent derives from such a bond. Any transfer of affections from the parents to others is blocked so effectively that the child can care for no one but the beloved parent or someone who is so similar to the parent as to be a virtual duplicate.

Sometimes a little child will fail to develop socially because he has a violent attachment to another child. The romantic notions of adults may make them encourage a deep and exclusive friendship between two girls or between two boys; but when a child spends all of his time with another child and will have little or nothing to do with any others, it is an indication of retardation in development which should receive serious consideration and treatment.

Treatment should not consist of breaking up the friendship. If the child is attached to one person the removal of that person would merely leave him stranded. He would be in a predicament similar to that of the woman who loved no one in this world except her pet cat. When the cat died she had nothing more for which to live and attempted suicide.

The child who is too narrow in his social adjustments needs to broaden out and that can be accomplished only by giving him opportunities to meet others and to make the associations with these others more satisfying to him than those with the individual to whom he is in emotional bondage. The child who is attached too closely to his mother should learn that there is pleasure to be obtained by associating with others. When he has learned this lesson he becomes emancipated without any feeling of deprivation or loneliness.

Teach the child to adjust to larger and larger numbers of

individuals if you would teach him to be a very thoroughly socialized person. It is only through broad contacts that he learns that people differ and that they must be treated differently. He learns how to choose friends and how to avoid enemies. If he has one fortunate experience with others, he does not assume that all people will treat him with the same generosity. If someone proves false to a trust, he does not believe that all men are deceitful and untrustworthy. He learns to discriminate and thus avoids the dangers of being too dependent and trustful, or too suspicious. Social maturity means social discernment.

There are numbers of children who want friends, who have not tied themselves emotionally to any other one person or to a small group of persons, who have the desire to be of service to others and know the pleasure to be gained by being needed by others, but who do not know how to win friends. They need to be taught the various techniques of social adjustment. These techniques are easily learned if they are practiced in childhood. They are best learned when the child is not aware that he is learning them. They are not so easily acquired by adults who have become fixed in their social habits and attitudes.

The principle that the teacher should keep in mind in giving social training is that socialization is merely an enlargement of the child's sphere of activity; he is learning to be sensitive to things he previously ignored, he is learning to discern in the activities of other persons indicators of how they think and feel. The child must learn to understand other persons if he hopes to get along with them. The attempt to make friends is futile if there is no understanding of the persons whom the child is attempting to win.

The hunger for friends, or the feeling that one is disliked, may manifest itself in forms that seem, on the surface, to have no relation to any such desire. The study of a few of these will demonstrate that many social maladjustments are caused by a lack of social experience combined with an intense desire to make friends. Bungling attempts to win friends usually combine zeal and ignorance.

Buffoonery is not an uncommon procedure for a child to use who has been accustomed to gaining attention by showing off and who suddenly finds that he is no longer the center of the stage when he does his favorite tricks. Instead of appreciating the important fact that it was only doting relatives who enjoyed and praised his performances, he attributes his failure to a need for new methods of entertainment. He finds that his tricks are attention-getting only in so far as they are unusual so he begins his search for unusual things to do. Too often he is temporarily successful. He attracts the attention of the teacher and the pupils by his antics and thereby is encouraged to continue them. The following answers by a little boy illustrate such buffoonery. When asked how many fingers were on his right hand he glibly replied, "I have five fingers on my left hand, six fingers on my right hand, and none on both my hands. And that is all I have." When asked to tie a bow tie he replied, "No, I am too little to tie a bow tie. I'm going back to Babyland, just going back to Babyland. I'll never tie a bow again and won't that be grand." When asked what he would like to be when he grew up he answered, "When I grow up to be big I am going to be little. When I play I sock houses down and break tables down and break windows and smash doors down because I don't like houses." It



was found that this boy was wholly incapable of competing with his baby sister for the attention of his mother and father unless he used silly mannerisms and chattered in the silly fashion described above. Such behavior always distracted his parents from his sister and so he tried the same antics in school whenever he felt neglected.

One little girl vomited in order to get the attention she so much desired from her mother. A boy developed a depressed air which he had found to be an effective attention-getting device. One little boy stopped everybody on the street and yelled, "You are full of Bologna." Another offered to sing and play upon every occasion. One little girl came to school one day dressed in a top hat and carrying a cane.

The variety of such behavior is unlimited. In each case the form that it takes is determined by the fact that the child has discovered from experience that the person whose attention he desires responds to that particular variety of conduct on his part. He may try a great number before he discovers the one that brings the right reaction from his mother, father, or teacher; but he soon discards the ineffective ones and continues with the ones that bring success. In other words, the kind of behavior that a child uses in his attempt to win friends is an indication of the area of sensitivity of his mother, father, or teacher. By responding to the queer behavior of a child, and ignoring him when he is conventional, we are teaching the child to be queer. Then, after we have taught him some annoying trick, we complain about it and punish him for performing it.

Some children do acts that are considered naughty or immoral in order to win the esteem of the one they desire to secure for a friend. It is not unusual for a child to steal

money in order to buy gifts for the teacher or for other children. One little boy took the money from his teacher's pocketbook in order to buy her presents. The teacher was much shocked at this conduct and thought it demonstrated a total lack of social sense in the boy. Instead of a dishonest tendency, it demonstrated that the boy was hungry for social esteem and did not know how to get it. He thought he had to buy it. When the teacher demonstrated to him that he had her approval, he no longer felt the necessity of stealing money to buy her love with gifts.

This incident illustrates what may happen if the child does not advance beyond the barter stage of social development. Mothers may encourage such behavior by telling children that they will not love them unless they do errands for them, work around the house, or the like. "Go to the store for mother and show her that you love her," they say. From such bargainings the child is taught that love is bought by gifts and favors bestowed.

What the child should be taught is that giving favors is too often a form of enslaving the recipient. If he accepts your gifts he is thereby placing himself under obligation to you. Perhaps children do appreciate this and give gifts to the teacher in order to obligate her to grant a good grade. Certainly many children do utilize this device. Nevertheless, in some instances generosity is utilized by the child because he does not know any other way to win esteem.

Another mistake that children make in their attempt to win friends is the use of boasting and lying. It grows out of the same background as does exhibitionism and buffoonery and merely demonstrates that the child who uses it is socially immature and does not understand other persons. Tall tales, gross exaggerations, the narration of

imaginary episodes, and even lies which appear malicious in intent, are often little more than attempts to gain social approval by a child who knows no better way.

Sometimes boasting is so apparent that it requires no particular insight to see that the child is compensating for an inferiority. For example, one little boy made remarks demonstrating an oscillation between fear and bravado throughout an intelligence test. At one moment he would be saying: "Oh, I thought I was going to get caught on that one. I'm so nervous, and I always get weak in the knees every time I try to do something important. I'm always afraid I'll get mixed up. I'm stuck. Gosh! I only got part of that right. I wonder why!" The next moment, having finished a test to his own satisfaction he would pound his fist on his chest and say: "(Great me! I'm smart! Say, Mamma should be here watching me! But then, she's not, so why should I care! You can't fool me! I'll show you what I can do. Come on! Let's get going! What's next?"

In some cases the background of fear is not so obvious and the child appears merely to be conceited. It is the exaggeration of claims that gives the clue to the possible underlying inferiority. One who is genuinely self-confident does not usually overstate his qualifications to the degree that the child did who told us the following items about herself. She stated that she had a very fine voice, that she had sung in a child's choir but, being found too good for them, she was placed in an adult choir. (She was ten years of age.) She taught her brother all he knew of singing and he now was a good singer too. She frequently played pool, she said, with her brother but always beat him. She admitted she was an excellent marble player. If she had none to play with, her brother staked her to start but she

always won them back and as many more as she wanted. She stopped only because she got tired of playing. She claimed to be an excellent fighter and could whip anyone she wanted to fight with. She said that she was very popular and to support this claim she told the following incident. One day the teacher kept two boys and her in at recess. Then the teacher asked all the children if they wanted Boy No. 1 to come out and play with them and they replied "No." The same negative reply greeted her suggestion that the second boy come out and play. But when the teacher asked them if they wanted her to come out they all yelled, "Yes." She was the best ball player on the boy's team, she said, and beat everyone in running. She had a bankbook as big as a book and it was full of records of money she had put in the bank. In fact, no subject could be suggested in which she did not excel. She did it all with complete nonchalance and complacency. Underneath she was not so self-satisfied, we learned. She was really jealous of her brother and all her stories were centered around her desire to outdo him and to win the esteem of her parents.

Bullying is another faulty method sometimes used to win friends. The dictionary defines a bully as a blustering fellow who is more insolent than courageous. A bully is often a child with a strong physique who uses force to gain his ends rather than the more troublesome method of attempting to gain co-operation. Sometimes bullying results from the fact that the child has been treated roughly by his parents or by some other child, and his blustering is an attempt to get revenge or to apply methods which he has seen succeed in the hands of others.

Friends are seldom won by bullying. Instead, bullying incites rebellion in those who have been treated insolently

and they often attempt to retaliate in some fashion. In many instances smaller boys have been known to "gang" together to protect themselves against some arrogant giant. If effective this reaction by the smaller children produces abject cowardice in the big child. It is a pathetic sight to see a hulking fellow who is afraid of the other children. He probably banked all his hope of winning friends upon the use of his physical strength, thinking that their admiration of his force and leadership would make him the leader. When that failed he had nothing to fall back upon and his only recourse was fear. Teachers would do well to look into a situation thoroughly before they encourage the smaller children to "take down" the school bully. Often the bully is already a coward at heart and needs encouragement rather than increased opposition. On the other hand, the best way to cure a bully is to teach him more understanding of other children so that he can gain the pleasure that comes with co-operation.

Should the bully win, and intimidate his comrades, he is likely to gain a type of homage which is very unwholesome. The child who is forced into subjection, and then idolizes the one who has conquered him, becomes an abject slave. Any slight sign of approval from his lord and master is all that the poor slave desires. The training resulting from this situation is bad for all concerned. The weakling thus produced can only hunt for others to whom he can cling and will shun any type of responsibility. The bully is learning to be a tyrant who, in later life, may expect others to do his bidding without question. Sometimes we talk glibly of producing leaders in such a manner as to imply that a leader is one who can bring others to submission and, consequently, we tend to encourage bullying in young children with the mistaken belief that we are

training for leadership. The best type of leadership is that which grows out of co-operation. A good leader deserves a following only as long as his leadership is sane and can obtain the reasoned support of his followers. Socialization based on this principle is much more valuable than the encouragement of a bully whose only qualification is that he can strut and intimidate others.

The extreme urge to boss is usually bred in a situation where there is some inequality in station. Many homes are nothing but an arena in which various members are trying to bring the others into subjection. Each member is trying to raise his own status and to lower the status of the others in the home. The child who comes from such a home is not hard to detect. He may be either bossy or submissive but, in either case, he shows too much consciousness of the necessity for someone to be boss. Give and take co-operation, without any child being too aggressive or too submissive, is a much more wholesome situation than one in which there is an outstanding leader or where there is bitter competition for leadership. Hero-worship is not wholesome when the hero is one of the group involved. Worshiped heroes should either be dead or should be so far removed as to offer no direct competition to those present.

It is often instructive to watch a child when he is given some position of authority. He may blossom under such responsibility; he may seem to know how to get the rest of the children to co-operate and take great pride in seeing the entire task or objective accomplished. He knows each child well enough to understand how to make him want to take an active part in the enterprise. On the other hand, another child may seem to think that such a delegation of authority is an opportunity to exploit the other

children. He takes his appointment as proof of his superiority and is merely intent upon gaining subservience from the others. A child who reacts in such an arrogant manner may be suspected of having a latent inferiority feeling. Such a child is more concerned with gaining some means of overcoming his inferiority than he is in grasping the true significance of leadership.

Too often it is assumed that the boy who is tough, who fights and who does mean things to the other children is self-satisfied and hates the others. Often the reverse of this is true. The child who pushes, pinches, kicks, and fights may be one who is hungry for friends and who has become desperate. His excessive urge to win friends together with his irritation because of his failure, combine to produce such behavior.

However, it is not wise to suppose that all fighting is based on the same cause. Fighting may result from an attempt on the part of a boy to demonstrate his manhood, to get attention, or to retaliate for fancied or real mistreatment. It may be an expression of hate, or it may be a wholesome attempt to adjust. It is dangerous, as we have said repeatedly, to brand any type of conduct as bad and then to deal with the child on the basis of that judgment. The specific act should never be judged until the whole situation is studied with sufficient thoroughness to provide evidence as to the causal background of the behavior. With such a context it may be discovered that apparently bad conduct is really a manifestation of a most desirable motive.

It may be helpful for the teacher who is searching for specific causes of social maladjustments to have at hand a summary of the factors that are most influential in the production of disharmony.

1. Some children are non-social because they are too completely satisfied with themselves. They must learn to become sensitive to other persons, to understand them, and to learn the pleasure that may be derived from knowing that they are essential to the happiness of others.

2. Some children are devoted too exclusively to some one person, such as mother, father, grandmother, or some other child. They must have their social contacts increased.

3. Some children are emotionally enslaved by some person from whom they would like to escape but do not know how to make the break. They need to be taught self-reliance.

4. Some children are very conscious of their need for friends but do not know how to win them. Their efforts are likely to be forced and unwelcome to others because they make their attentions too obvious. They should be taught, by experience, the principle that others like them when they contribute to the happiness of others and not when they show off, strut, or attempt to prove their value to others.

5. Some children are out of harmony because of some accidental and temporary circumstance. These situations are remedied best by disposing as soon as possible of any reminder of the unfortunate incidents and creating new situations that are favorable for harmony. Many temporary situations become the cause of permanent disharmony because they are stressed too much.

6. Some children are overconscious of some physical defect or some lack of attractiveness. It is a mistake to dwell upon the unimportance of physical charm or to resort to the use of such adages as "Beauty is only skin deep" in an attempt to console children. Children will



soon forget such deficiencies and be totally unconscious of them in their playmates if adults will only ignore them. Avoid personal comparisons of any sort.

7. Some children have difficulty because they have had training which is different from that of the other children. This is true when a child moves into a group from a foreign country or from urban to rural life. The rest of the children may interpret his unusual behavior as aloofness or snobbishness. Training in tolerance is needed in such cases and it is accomplished best by teaching children to understand individual differences. Children are intolerant only as a result of training in intolerance by adults.

Play is the best means for giving children social education. It is in play activities that a child shows most clearly any symptoms of social maladjustment and from the observation of children under play conditions the teacher may form hypotheses as to the nature of the difficulty. Having formulated her hypotheses, she can direct the play in such a manner as to correct the difficulty. If the treatment is not effective, she will probably be able to revise it and modify her treatment by continued observation of the child's play.

All training in social adaptation must be by indirect teaching and never by preachments as to the value of acquiring friends. Play is the best way of effecting social contacts without the child being aware that he is adjusting to other children. In play the child learns to take for granted his co-operation with other children and in play he learns to understand them. Adjusting to other children is not presented to him as a virtue; it is all a part of the game. He detects the little things which are not socially acceptable, he sees when he has done a mean thing, and he learns to like the other children without any realization

of what is happening to him. In teamwork he learns the pleasure of being necessary to the others. This is the ideal way to learn to get along with people.

#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. All social behavior is learned. If a child is socially maladjusted, try to discover the type of teaching which will correct the difficulty.
2. The only way to administer social education is by social experience. See that the child has a breadth of social contacts and the foundation will be laid for a wholesome social life.
3. The goal of social education is to make every child feel that he is essential to the happiness of others. Place him in situations where he can be of service to others and he will learn this lesson much more quickly and thoroughly than by admonishing him to be unselfish.
4. Intolerance is a childish attitude which denotes lack of social experience and which will be outgrown with the growth of understanding of others. Tolerance is not so much a virtue as it is evidence of social maturity.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Why is it a mistake to urge children to make friends?
2. How does a child learn his first social lessons?
3. Describe the parasitical stage of social development.
4. How may a child come to believe that friendships are to be bought?
5. How does a child learn to be sensitive to the wishes of others?
6. Explain how a child learns to feel that he is needed by others.
7. Show how unselfishness is developed.
8. What can be done to help the self-satisfied child?
9. Discuss the significance of exhibitionism.
10. What is the danger that comes from a strong attachment to one person?
11. Describe some faulty methods that a child may use to gain friends.
12. What are the characteristics of real leadership?
13. What are some specific causes of social maladjustment and what should be done to correct each?
14. Discuss the importance of play as a means of social education.

## CHAPTER XVII

### INSTABILITY

It is not uncommon for a child to be characterized as nervous; but the use of such a vague term, unless supplemented by a more accurate description, tells very little about a child. A search for the specific types of conduct which lead to such a characterization usually discloses such symptoms as: fidgeting, twitching, restlessness, drumming with the fingers or toes, scratching the head or other parts of the body, irritability, nail-biting, nose-picking, laughing or crying spells, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, vomiting, lack of concentration, convulsions, and choretic movements. A child may have only one of these symptoms or he may have a number in combination.

Children with such symptoms are usually very annoying to the teacher because they upset schoolroom decorum. The teacher usually blames the trouble on a lack of control and is likely to tell the child that he needs to develop poise and to restrain the annoying habits. Such methods are usually ineffective. It has been found that the more the attention of the child is directed to such behavior the more the symptom is likely to take on an exaggerated form. Some teachers find that they gain some ground by ignoring them. Neither process — neither ignoring the symptom nor urging the child to self-control — gets to the root of the trouble. These acts are symptoms of some difficulty which must be remedied if the child is to get rid of the symptom.

Perhaps some light may be shed upon the significance

of these signs of instability if we can see where they will lead the child if they are not corrected. Adults who manifest symptoms similar to these are diagnosed psychoneurotics. The diagnosis of psychoneurosis is given only to relatively mild cases of maladjustment and so the teacher need have less alarm when symptoms of instability are discovered than when some signs are seen which point to the more severe mental maladjustments. Psychoneurotics are seldom found in hospitals for mental diseases because they are able to get along fairly well without hospital care. They are annoying people to live with but not so annoying that we must get rid of them. From these facts it can be inferred that unstable children are proceeding in the direction of a psychoneurosis, the mildest type of mental disorder, and that the teacher has a good chance of success when she attempts to help them. They may never arrive at the destination of a psychoneurosis, they may change their course and develop some disorder much worse, or they may become thoroughly normal adults.

Neurotic symptoms are unconscious manifestations of tensions that result from refusing to adjust consciously to situations that are distressing. They indicate that the attempts at repression on the part of the child are not very successful and, at the same time, they are evidences that he has not adopted a defense mechanism that would provide a substitute outlet for the repressed impulse.

The unstable child is manifesting indecision as to what he should do to adjust. He must do something, he feels; but every adjustment he begins to make seems faulty even before he starts to make it; every idea which occurs to him he rejects almost as soon as it presents itself. He is bewildered and can do no more than make unceasing

abortive attempts to do something, he knows not what or why.

In short, instability is the first indication of trouble and, if the child is handled properly, he will not come to serious grief. If the symptoms are intensified by a bungling teacher, who sees nothing in the child's conduct except its annoyingness to her, the child will be driven to the adoption of some device which may end in tragedy. When such an eventuality occurs the bungling teacher is very likely to take it as a confirmation of the fact that she was right in considering the child unstable. She announces that she could foresee his end because of these early signs. What she is really saying is that the child made a pathetic appeal to her for help when he manifested the signs of instability but, instead of responding to his call for help, she ignored his pleas and refused to save him. Instead of boasting that she could foresee his downfall, she should be chagrined at the fact that she did not have interest enough or intelligence enough to prevent it, since she predicted it so accurately.

About the easiest way to produce signs of instability in a child is to nag him continually. Picking at a child, no matter how normal he may be, will produce bewilderment. Most naggers are motivated by good intentions; they do not realize that they are nagging at the child because they are too zealous in making him conform to some preconceived pattern of behavior. Their good intentions do not make the treatment any less harmful. The worst type of nagging is that which is hidden under the cloak of devoted and loving service.

It is relatively easy to discover whether or not a child has been the victim of nagging. Wait until he is doing some task in relative quiet and with some composure and

then speak to him sharply and critically. Snap at him: "Don't hold your pencil like that. Stop biting your lip like that and sit still. Who told you to put your paper in that position when you write? Now, hurry and do it as I told you." The nagged child will become jumpy and emotional.

As an illustration of instability resulting from nagging, let us cite the case of a girl of about six years of age who was reported because she was restless, bit her nails, showed signs of stammering, and was beginning to get very stubborn. The mother stated that she never picked at the child and could not understand why she should have become that way. When tested in the clinic by a very tactful and poised examiner, the girl showed none of the symptoms that her mother had described. As the family were preparing to leave the clinic, the nurse, who had accompanied them, began to prepare the child for the trip home. She held the child's coat but, just as she was about to put her arm into the sleeve, the nurse drew it back and said, "Say please." Whereupon the child grew rigid and replied, "I won't say please." Then a battle began, the nurse and child both yelling at each other more and more violently, both getting more and more angry.

The mother watched this performance with growing disapproval. Finally she was asked, "Do you see what the nurse is doing to the child?"

"Of course I do," she replied. "She is trying to teach her to be polite. I cannot see why the child gets so stubborn and refuses to do what she asks her to do."

This little episode illustrates a type of teaching that is all too common. A child is started on some act and then the act is quickly interrupted with an order to do it

another way or to say or do something which the adult wishes. Such treatment is nothing but a variety of teasing which the teacher justifies by thinking she must direct the child. It is little different in kind from the trick of holding a piece of candy to a child and then pulling it away when he reaches for it. Both naturally make the child angry. There are many practical jokes which operate on the same principle. For example, one boy will stop another who is obviously in a hurry, ask him to come over to hear something that he wishes to tell him, and then deliberately ask him, "How far would you have been if you had not stopped?"

The commonest symptoms which result from nagging are little jerky movements of the eyes, mouth, or nose. They are called *tics*. Or the convulsive movements may become more widespread and involve the arms, legs, or even the entire body. These wider convulsive movements are called *choretic movements*; a common name for them is St. Vitus' dance. Not all tics and choreas come from nagging; some organic conditions may result in similar convulsive movements. Nevertheless, where no organic cause can be discovered and there is evidence of nagging, the latter should be considered as a causal factor. In either case, the child will be helped if he is removed from the supervision of anyone who is unstable and irritable and if he is permitted to work calmly and smoothly in his own way.

Nail-biting is a habit that often results from the same kind of situation which produces tics and choreas. At times the nail-biter also grits and grinds his teeth either during the day or at night during his sleep. The best cure is to remove the source of irritation so that the child can develop calm and poise.

Even after a child has gained poise he may continue to bite his nails in a sort of absent-minded fashion merely because he has acquired the habit of doing so. It might be thought that direct reminders would help in such a case but, too often, such treatment merely makes the child self-conscious and spoils what control the child has gained. Several experiments have demonstrated that a poised child who has the habit of nail-biting can be helped or even cured by positive training in caring for the nails. If the nails are manicured daily by a trained manicurist, the child may take a direct interest in improving the appearance of his hands and may be taught eventually to do the manicuring himself. This technique will probably be more successful with girls than with boys.

Stuttering is another symptom of instability and one which is very difficult to treat because the stuttering may persist stubbornly even after the originating cause has been removed. Another difficulty which the teacher confronts in her dealings with the stutterer is the vast number of theories which have been urged upon her as to the cause of stuttering and an equal number of remedies which she is told to apply. The teacher would do well not to ride any hobby in connection with speech theories but to see each speech defect as an individual problem which can be corrected only when the entire personality of the stutterer is understood. The important consideration to keep in mind is to do what is best for the afflicted child and not to furnish evidence for or against any theory.

Some speech difficulties arise, no doubt, from the fact that the child has never learned the intricate co-ordinations that speech involves. It is the same lack of co-ordination (because of lack of practice) that may be seen when a child drops a spoon during the process of eating, spills



water when he tries to fill a glass, drops a dish when he attempts to dry it, or when a young boy cuts his face in his first attempts to shave. The way to improve motor co-ordination is to give the child exercises that will strengthen the muscles involved in the act and, after strength has been established, give him more and more practice until the finer controls are established. Attempts to gain control without sufficient motor strength are futile. Nagging and scolding a child who shows any type of inco-ordination merely accentuates the difficulty by making the child more self-conscious and less sure of himself.

One group of theories in connection with stuttering should be mentioned specifically because they have done much to impede progress in the correction of speech defects. These theories imply that certain areas of the brain are dominant in speech co-ordinations and that stuttering results from a confusion of nervous impulses in these areas. One theory states that one side of the brain should dominate and that if such dominance is not present there will be a conflict in authority between the two cerebral hemispheres and the struggle of each hemisphere for a dictatorship will lead to stuttering. Another statement of this theory implies that if a child is changed from left-to right-handedness it interferes with the dominance of the speech center and stuttering results.

Much experimental work with animals has proved that, after a part of the cerebral cortex, a part involved in a certain function, has been removed, that function may be restored by proper training. Many children have been changed from one hand to another without any detrimental effect upon their speech or upon any other aspect of their personalities. Besides, a person may learn a

great many different motor processes which require different combinations of the same neurones and muscular apparatus, without any consequent disturbance of any of the activities. The important element seems to be whether the child is taught in a manner which makes him unstable, uncertain in his reactions, and lacking in self-confidence in his ability; or whether he is taught in a manner which increases his poise, calmness, and self-confidence. If a habit is taught in a positive manner, with growing strength and co-ordination of the essential muscles, and with increasing self-confidence as practice proceeds, the teacher need have no concern as to whether the habit is going to be blocked by previous habits involving the same motor apparatus.

Almost any child can be made to stutter if you yell at him and nag at him vigorously enough, just as he can be made to make mistakes when he is attempting any motor act under similar circumstances. Teach a child to use his voice in play, to shout, to sing vigorously, to enunciate with confidence and, at the same time, teach him poise and self-confidence and his speech difficulties will certainly be helped.

Should a left-handed child be taught to write with his right hand? If the handedness can be changed without producing tension and irritation, the change does no harm. If it does make for instability, it should not be continued. The question cannot be answered until the effect of such training upon the child is known.

Instability may show itself in dreams, night terrors, and sleepwalking episodes. Sometimes the content of the dream, the cries that the child utters in his night terror, or the acts that he performs in his sleepwalking may indicate the nature of his difficulty. A stable child should be

able to work and play vigorously and to be able to relax quickly and sleep soundly when he retires. If he is jealous of his siblings, if he is the victim of irritations in the home or school, if he fears that he has been guilty of some misconduct, or if he feels insecure in any way, he is very likely to show it in restless sleep or even sleeplessness. All the irritations and disappointments of the day should be ironed out before the child retires, so that he can go to sleep with the feeling that he has had a happy successful day and that tomorrow will provide an opportunity to enjoy life even more completely. Evening should be a period of calmness and happiness and not a time when parents should get square with their children for all the mistakes that they have made during the day.

Hyperactivity in a child should not be confused with instability. Some children have more physical vitality than others and are more active because of bubbling energy. The attempt to suppress such a child may make him into an irritable individual because his innocent activities are thwarted at every turn. Instead of repressing the vigorous activity of a healthy child, attempts should be made to give him wholesome and satisfying outlets for his energy.

Whereas all these manifestations of instability which we have discussed indicate that the child is in need of some assistance so that he may have less indecision, more smoothness in his co-ordinations, a greater sense of security, and less of the feeling that he is being pressed to do things which are beyond his ability; they are more hopeful signs than if the child showed premature stability. Adjustment involves instability and childhood should be a period of unstable equilibrium, a period of continual readjustment. It is a more healthful sign for a child to

manifest symptoms of readjustment than to have adopted too exclusively any of the defense mechanisms we have described in this book. He had better be unstable than to have regressed, than to have acquired the habit of backbiting, of blaming or reforming others, than to have learned to get sick to evade difficulties, and the like. The teacher should be careful not to force the unstable child into some stable adjustment which is, in any sense, an escape from the real conflict or an evasion of the responsibility of making a rational adjustment.

Pathological instability results from the attempt to adjust without an adequate realization of the significance of the specific situation to which an adjustment must be made. If the child is impressed with the fact that he must solve some issue at once, that he must react at once, and then is halted in the middle of every attempt that he makes, his life can be no more than a series of starts and stops, accompanied by increasing anxiety and worry as to the eventual outcome.

He should be encouraged to study each problem, should be permitted to advance far enough on any solution for him to discover for himself that it is correct or faulty, and should then decide on another alternative in the light of his own mistakes. Only enough supervision should be utilized to help him to avoid any serious calamity in his adjusting attempts.

If the adult is too anxious about the outcome, he tends to develop children into premature old fogies. If the child is presented with a ready-made philosophy of life, he tends to adhere to rules he cannot understand. He should evolve his own philosophy of living without realizing that he is doing so. His experiences, if they are carried out with growing insight, will eventually give him certain

formulae which he applies with intelligence. If the adult refuses to permit him to work out his own principles of living, he either becomes unstable and frightened at life, or he accepts adult formulae and is afraid of any new adjustment.

#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. "Nervousness" in a child is a sign that he has been oversupervised to such an extent that he cannot make his own adjustments. Find out who has been picking at him and remove him from their influence.

2. Teach the child to carry out an attempted solution of a problem by himself and far enough for him to judge whether he is moving in the right direction or not. Keep him plastic enough so that he will be willing to change his method when he is convinced that he is wrong. Consistency is no virtue if one is consistently wrong.

3. Do not attempt to make a child stable. Instability is a necessary accompaniment of healthful adjustments. If he manifests symptoms of indecision and fear, teach him how to make better adjustments and the symptoms will disappear.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Enumerate some of the symptoms of "nervousness."
2. Why is it poor practice to call a child's attention to his annoying motor habits?
3. What diagnosis is given to an adult who manifests extreme signs of instability?
4. What do neurotic symptoms indicate?
5. What part does indecision play in instability?
6. How are signs of instability developed in a child?
7. How can a teacher determine whether or not a child has been nagged?
8. Describe tics.
9. What is the significance of nail-biting?
10. What methods can be used to overcome nail-biting?
11. Give reasons why speech disturbances should be handled in the same manner as any other type of motor inco-ordination.
12. Explain why children should be unstable.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### INTELLECTUAL DEFECTS

An intelligence rating is very essential before an attempt is made to correct any instance of queer or immoral conduct. Without this our best judgment is likely to go astray. But, having given the intelligence test, we must not assume, if the individual rates slightly or even seriously below normal, that this in itself is the cause of any abnormal conduct. It may be the cause; but it is more likely to be only a contributing factor; and since it is a factor that cannot be changed very much, it seems to be all the more important to be on the lookout for other factors that will lend themselves to remedial measures. The environment must be adapted to the intelligence of the individual as well as to his other qualities. If the child is a moron, put him through a course of training calculated to make a social being from such material; do not put him in a situation designed to develop the bright child and then if he fails to conform blame it on his lack of intelligence. Blame the failure on the persons who construct an educational system which uses the same methods for individuals with different mental equipment.

We readily admit the fact that all men are not equal physically and that they never can become so. They are not the same in color of hair or eyes, in physical features, in tastes, or any other characteristics that we may select. Just so, there are differences in intellectual capacity which we should admit as readily. If this is so, how can we ever

take the attitude that each individual should have equal influence in legislation, in the preservation of peace and harmony, and in the direction and control of other human affairs? We may try to give all an equal opportunity to take part in these matters, but they cannot take part equally. The more intelligent ones will inevitably take the lead as every move of human affairs has amply demonstrated.

Percceiving these facts, a new theory has been advanced: that, while we cannot give equality to all on account of individual differences, we can at least give all equal opportunity. This is a fallacy impossible of fulfillment. We cannot extend an equal opportunity to all; we can endeavor to keep the external environment the same for all individuals, but that will only accentuate the difference in individuals. We may argue that if we keep the school conditions exactly the same, if we give each child an equal opportunity and he does not respond, it is his fault; we have done our part in presenting the opportunity, and so we wash our hands of the result.

As well might the physician have as his philosophy "an equal chance of life for all," and in order to present this equal opportunity expose each infant to the same amount of air, food, etc., leaving it to the child to respond in accordance with his capacity. If some die, the physician has exonerated himself; he has given an equal opportunity of life to all. A physician does not do anything of the sort. He will allow a sturdy child much freedom because this child has an extraordinarily strong constitution and some hardships will do him good. He makes an abject slave of another, penning him in a room, and forcing him to stay in bed under the constant supervision of a nurse. The physician is anything but democratic, and yet no

one tries to legislate against the type of slavery he is practicing.

Our task is not to provide equal opportunity for all; that phrase is a bit of high-sounding sophistry that has no real meaning. Society may owe it to a feeble-minded boy to make the most possible of him, but such an objective is not reached by making him waste time and effort trying to do the impossible. What is it we owe to those who have not been blessed with the highest degree of intelligence? We owe them the right to secure as much of happiness as it is possible for them to have; but we must not make the mistake of thinking that it takes the same things to make all individuals happy. The complexity of things required to make an individual happy is closely correlated with his intelligence. A highly intelligent man is not happy unless he has complicated work, while a less intelligent individual is miserable if placed in a position where more is required of him than he can perform. An illustration may make this clear. During the mobilization of our army a recruit came to the office of the Psychological Examining Board and asked for an intelligence examination. This request was so unusual that he was asked why he wanted such a test. It developed that he had been drilled for a period of six weeks and could not learn to march properly. He said that he had tried his best but that he could not learn. The captain used to take him out in front of the company and march him up and down, yelling and swearing at him, so as to make an example of him for the rest of the company and incidentally to make him learn by means of the severity of this special discipline. The poor recruit was very much humiliated. His comrades teased him and said that he did not want to learn because he was a coward and did



not want to go to France. He said he was not afraid to fight, that he wanted to go to France, but that he could not learn to drill. What he wanted was to be transferred to the remount depot to work with the horses. This unit was exposed to as many dangers as any other and was planning to leave camp just as soon as, or sooner than, the organization with which he was drilling. He was given a test and it was found that he was a moron. He was transferred, on the recommendation of the Psychological Board, to the remount depot and a few weeks later came back with his face beaming. He said that his remount unit was leaving that day for France, that he was having a fine time working there at something he could do, and that he hoped he would be in the thick of the fight before long. A high-grade man might not have been happy doing simple stable work; but this man was happy, because it was a job suited to his ability. Democracy does not mean equality of position, of possessions, or of freedom. It means an equal right to happiness, if we understand that the requirements to produce happiness vary with the capabilities and characteristics of different individuals.

With this point of view it can be seen how erroneous is the current notion that psychologists are on the lookout for those of defective intelligence in order hopelessly to brand them in such a way as to rob them of part of their share of life. The aim of the psychologist is to make people happy and not to brand them. He knows that they can be happy only when properly adjusted to their environment; and his testing programs and analyses are only steps in the direction of furthering this adjustment. In some types of maladjustment the thing to do is to readjust the individual to the situation as it exists; but

this cannot be done very readily with one who has inferior mental ability. In this case the only thing to do is to adjust the environment to the individual, or rather, to select that part of life which is suitable to his level. This is only a more painless way of doing what would eventually happen to him should he be given so-called freedom and turned loose to shift for himself.

Nor does this mean that the psychologist or teacher who uses psychological tests should bluntly and untactfully make unwarranted and dogmatic statements. The physician who finds a person with pulmonary tuberculosis is not thereby warranted in bluntly informing the patient that he is inferior in that he has a vicious disease, that he is a menace to society and must be locked up till he dies. Yet, this is the equivalent of what some tactless psychologists have been doing, and they have done inestimable harm to the work. For instance, one shortsighted and tactless individual examined a boy of sixteen who had a mental age of about twelve (his intelligence quotient was 75), which placed him in the borderline group between the normal and the feeble-minded. This boy came from a very fine home, he had received much social culture, and his parents were anxious to do all in their power to help him. The psychologist in making the report stated that his was the type of mentality from which criminals are made, that the boy was likely to become a menace to society, and that the best thing to do was to place him in an institution. Such a statement was absurd and unwarranted. Further study of the boy showed that he had no vicious tendencies. He was very childish in his tastes and preferred to stay at home and take care of the baby or wash dishes rather than to play the usual boy's games. After further investigation of his case the parents decided

to relinquish high hopes that the boy might take advanced training in high school and college and secured work for him in a trade requiring skill but little adaptability. The boy has been in the work for several years now and is doing well, is happy in his work and delighted with his success, and has made as nearly a perfect social adjustment as one could ask.

Oftentimes a person of mediocre ability is forced into criminality by the hopeless complexity (for him) of the situations into which he is thrust. A teacher will try for six or eight years to teach a feeble-minded boy to read, instead of teaching him to do with his hands some task of which he is capable. She vainly imagines that if he does not learn academic subjects his life will be ruined. Education is a process designed to bring out what is in the child. To be able to do this we must first find out what is in him and then bring that out. In our mad desire to make all children do the same thing, we often overlook what the individual child is fitted to do and thus ruin any possibilities that he may possess by lack of any encouragement toward their development. Then, after we have wasted time for eight years trying to bring out what is not there, we turn the poor victim of our ignorance out into society. He is not trained to adapt himself even to the humblest vocation and so is very likely to become an economic and moral wreck. How much better it would be to recognize that there are mental levels and social levels, and in line with this knowledge to attempt to adjust each pupil to the social situation especially suitable for him!

The high-grade feeble-minded or the low-grade normal cases, those at or near the borderline, are much more difficult to deal with than are the easily recognized feeble-minded cases. These borderline cases are not severely

enough retarded to be clearly selected as feeble-minded and are usually regarded as normal. When people are normal they are supposed to possess judgment, discretion, and free will to carry out the dictates of society, and are judged accordingly when their conduct is not up to the social standard. Society is prone to regard the separating line as a sharp one, and having determined whether a person falls on the normal or feeble-minded side, it proceeds to treat him in the manner appropriate to that group. Hence, people bring children to a clinic and want to know whether they are normal; they do not seem to care in what part of the normal or retarded group they may fall — if they are normal, they are normal — if they are feeble-minded, they are feeble-minded — and that settles the issue. The middle or borderline group deserves special consideration for just this reason, as well as on the ground that certain types of defense reactions are more or less closely confined to this group.

It must be remembered that the borderline cases find adaptation to social conditions especially trying. Even the most intelligent person must admit that social ethics is not absolutely logical and consistent. We can all select instances where obviously unfair results come about and innocent individuals suffer. Perplexing as these things are, they become doubly so to the borderline case. He is not defective enough to overlook the issue and he is not intellectual enough to build his own philosophy of life. He may use any or all of the mechanisms described in previous chapters, but is often very naïve in doing so. In addition to these there are some defense devices that he finds particularly useful.

The first of these is the excessive display of uncontrolled activity. This same sort of thing may occur in normal

cases, but in the high-grade feeble-minded or dull normal individual it takes peculiar form. He uses it as a "bluff." The best illustration that the writer ever saw of this, came in connection with an army intelligence examination. An examiner (the writer) was giving the group examination to some recruits and was attracted by a young fellow on the front row. When instructions were being given this lad looked straight at the examiner as though keenly alert to every syllable he was uttering. When the signal was given to work he literally jumped at the page in his zeal to get a good score. Seemingly, he kept ahead of most of the others in the amount of material finished. The examiner had a very keen memory of this lad and his work because of his striking zeal, energy, and rapt attention to the work at hand. A few days later it happened that when some who had made particularly low scores in the group test were recalled for individual examination, this lad was among the number. Thinking a mistake must surely have been made the examiner went to the files, found his examination paper, and discovered that he had done an abominable piece of work. Truly he had worked far down each page, but he had practically no correct answers. Individual examination showed that he was a high-grade moron<sup>1</sup> who had obviously taken this method of fooling people. He probably had often succeeded in fooling others and would have done so in this instance had it not been for the accurate check of a standardized test.

In this case, the simulation of intelligence by excess activity manifested itself in the exaggerated attention and industry. It often happens that it is shown particularly in speech, in which case, we have what is called a

<sup>1</sup> *Moron* is the Greek word for *fool* and is technically used to designate the group of feeble-minded just below the normal level — those having intelligence quotients between 50 and 75.

"loquacious moron." These individuals chatter away without the least discretion. They will shamelessly boast about their ability while they are doing an extremely poor performance. They think that if they acknowledge their cleverness the examiner will agree with them. They furnish incontrovertible evidence that it takes a wise man to hold his tongue.

The second method that the moron finds particularly useful is defense by irritability. This trick is very easily learned and readily lends itself to exaggeration. It is well known that anger is a good method for controlling the conduct of others. If we desire to gain a favor from another or to secure his co-operation, and have tried all the rational methods, such as persuasion, exhortation, and reason with no success, we can often get the desired end by a flash of temper. One who has been stolid before will often yield before anger. The child learns this trick and plays it on his mother; a tantrum is a common occurrence, and if not checked will grow in intensity. Hence, a high-grade feeble-minded person will often persist in this method of gaining his ends. This produces the irascible type of moron. A method adopted to gain certain ends becomes a common habit and at the least provocation such a moron will fly into a rage and even commit atrocities.

Another defense device of a moron is to gain his desired end by recklessly immoral conduct. This, of course, includes a large number of different types of behavior all having, however, the common characteristic that they are designed to gratify the impulses of the individual without the consideration of the restraints imposed by the social order. If a young man of this type wants to give his beloved a present and has not the means, he will proceed to gather it from the first available source. Those

in this group are clever enough to cover most of their traces and so form quite a different problem from the low-grade criminal. The low-grade criminal is often so because he has become the dupe of someone who is more clever than he is. He therefore is very likely to be caught and is easily led to divulge the secrets of his master. The high-grade criminal knows that he is non-social but lacks judgment to perceive that his methods are of the sort that almost inevitably lead to detection and punishment.

Some of the tricks used by persons of borderline intelligence might suggest that they are cunning; until one learns that the methods have been learned from others and were only acquired after long practice. For example, one of the artifices of a man of this type was as follows: Armed with a five-dollar bill and a one-dollar bill he would enter a store. He would purchase a small item such as a cigar or a pack of cigarettes and, amid a flow of talk about any trivial thing, he would present the five-dollar bill in payment. The clerk in the conventional manner would count out the change. Our crook would take the four one-dollar bills, and add to them the one-dollar bill which he had, and ask the clerk if he would mind giving him a five-dollar bill for the five ones. This the clerk would start to do. As soon as the five-dollar bill was exhibited the trickster would say: "I wonder if you have a ten? If you have I could get rid of all this change for one bill, and I would like it much better." The clerk would look for a ten and if he found one the crook would count out his five ones and the clerk's five and turn them over for the ten. Usually he was enabled to get the clerk so befuddled with all this money changing that he would get away with the trick.

Another such thing practiced by the same chap was to

get into a strange place and wiping his face with his handkerchief exclaim: "My, but I am transpiring." Some purist was almost sure to correct him immediately and inform him that he meant "perspiring." He would insist that he was correct — that he meant transpire; in fact he was willing to bet that he was right and usually succeeded in placing a bet of about five dollars. Then a dictionary was consulted (always an unabridged one was called for) and sure enough one of the meanings for transpire is "to pass through the pores of the skin." He always won his bet. By an alternation of these two tricks this young man was able to obtain sufficient money to keep himself in opium, a habit in keeping with his other traits.

Immediate reward is the incentive for learning for these people. They do not respond, as do normals, to the action of remote rewards and punishments. They learn that a certain act will bring a certain immediate reward and they will continue to perform this act with excessive persistence. This deceives the one who sees such behavior superficially because he thinks that such wonderful retention of a thing that has been learned demonstrates ability. Mental ability includes mental agility and thus embraces ability to unlearn a thing as well as to learn it when there is definite evidence that the first course is not the best. To unlearn a thing means the exercise of intelligence to form a new adjustment, and when one has a limited amount of ability one always has a fear of attacking what may appear an unnecessary mental problem. Therefore, a moron, once anchored, is loth to lessen his hold on solid ground. We are all familiar with the typical reaction of this class of individuals in the industrial and business world. They have to be taught in detail just what to do and then they do it accurately. To ask a person of this type to do an



unaccustomed task is, in his opinion, an injustice. Their common cry is, "That is not my job, why should he ask me to do that? He is trying to put one over on me." This holds for all spheres of conduct and once an unmoral trick has been learned the moron will say, "Why should I change? I get what I am after. Other people do the same," etc. For this reason the intensive moral training of a person of this type in early years is more essential than that of an individual of high-grade intelligence. There is a wider basis of appeal to the intelligent youth, whereas in the moron the appeal must be limited and often proves ineffectual.

Since the advent of mental testing there has been a strong tendency to look to intelligence or its lack in the search for the cause for all sorts of mental trouble. Surveys have been made of the inmates of prisons, reform schools, homes for delinquent women, and juvenile court cases, and the results compared with the performance of normal individuals on these same tests. Because the usual thing has been for these special groups to average lower in the tests than the normal groups, the conclusion has been advanced that feeble-mindedness is in a large measure accountable for behavior deviations. In spite of the statements made in connection with these studies, a large group of psychologists have long felt that this factor has been overemphasized. To be sure those who are caught in unsocial acts and are confined in institutions are of lower mental grade than those outside, but the low-grade intelligence has been a factor in their detection. If they had been a little shrewder, they might have done the same acts that brought upon them the punishment they are undergoing, but they might also have escaped.

It is highly probable that there are many criminals and

unsocial individuals outside these institutions. For this reason it is not legitimate to conclude that the factor which made those incarcerated easily caught — namely, their lack of intelligence — is in the same way responsible for their unsocial acts. Furthermore, there are many feeble-minded individuals who are not unsocial. Feeble-mindedness alone will not make a criminal; but feeble-mindedness plus some other trait may. Indeed, the tendency toward criminality may be very slight; but, when accentuated by feeble-mindedness, may give rise to criminality much more easily than an equal criminal tendency with normal intelligence. It is probably safe to conclude that feeble-mindedness is important in the production of unsocial conduct, but one must beware of the tendency to overemphasize this factor.

While feeble-mindedness may be the weakening factor that makes its possessor an easy victim to temptation to do unsocial acts, the situation is just the reverse when it comes to mental conflicts; a person of low intelligence is less likely to have a mental conflict than is a person of high intelligence. The moron's conflict is an objective one, a battle between his impulses and society. If his impulses are stronger, the individual becomes criminal or unsocial. If the restraints of society are sufficient, his conduct is moral.

A mental conflict, on the other hand, must be between ideals and reality. The one who has the mental conflict may be highly moral. His social conduct may be exemplary, yet he may have a violent struggle between the ideals that he has established and his impulses to act counter to these ideals. The outward restraints do not seem too rigid to such a person; he is not disturbed because of objective barriers to his desires — such barriers are a strengthening element to him and he desires to have

them made more and more severe. The thing that disturbs him is the incompatibility of his desires and ideals.

A mental conflict is partly an intellectual process and requires some intelligence. The formulation of ideals requires manipulation of ideas, and the recognition that these ideals run counter to primitive impulses is also an intellectual process. Hence, one who is defective in intellect is likely to ignore such a conflict because he cannot perform the intellectual functions that it presupposes. Mental conflicts increase in severity with the advancement of intelligence and with the progress of society. As society becomes more complex the ideals of life become more exalted and more exacting, and a greater amount of intelligence is required to appreciate and manipulate all the factors involved. Statistics have shown that there is a correlation between the frequency of psychoses and intelligence. Where the intelligence of a group is lower there is less mental maladjustment than where there is greater intelligence.

The measurement of intelligence of any person who shows signs of a mental conflict must, for the reasons given, be very important. Our institutions are filled with feeble-minded persons who have made a tremendous social wreck of their lives but who have had not the slightest signs of mental upset as a result. They have a lack of insight, but it is quite different from the lack of insight of a highly intelligent person. Ideals of a low-grade person relate solely to what he is forced to do in order to escape punishment; and his notion of rightness or wrongness is determined solely by the reaction of other persons toward his various acts.

A little boy came home from school one day and told his father that he had used an "awful bad" word in school

that day and that the teacher became very "mad" about it. He said that he had never seen her so "mad," that she scolded for a long, long time about it, and threatened terrible punishment if he should ever use it again. The father asked the boy what the word was, but for a long time the boy could not be induced to repeat it; he said that it was too bad to repeat, he could not do it after all the teacher had said. Finally, the father induced the boy to whisper this monstrous expression in his ear, and with great trepidation the boy said in a hushed whisper, "It was — 'I don't care.'" Because of her attitude this teacher had taught the boy that "I don't care" was a horrible thing to say. We recognize this as a perfectly logical interpretation of the teacher's attitude; but it implies that the boy, because of immaturity, did not use any judgment of his own in estimating the enormity of the thing he had done.

The feeble-minded never get above this method of gauging their actions, and their ideals are as changeable in accordance with the whims of others as are those of this boy. A mental conflict can only come when the ideals of the ego become somewhat stabilized and then something tends to interfere with them. The beginning of stabilized ideals marks the beginning of mental adjustment with its possibility of error. The childhood of a normal individual is the period when the different standards are evaluated and integrated so that when he comes to adolescence and maturity his ideals become more and more fixed. Then, after having established certain standards, he learns that in himself are tendencies which make it extremely hard or impossible to maintain these ideals, and so he begins the inevitable mental battle that comes from the clash of two antagonistic stabilized forces.

Failure in an intelligence test or in parts of the test may mean other things than lack of intelligence. For instance, many of the judgment errors of individuals suffering from mental trouble appear on the surface as lack of intelligence. Yet these same individuals, in fields not connected with their delusional ideas, show not the slightest error in judgment. Some of the Binet tests involve judgment, and it is quite conceivable that an error in such a test might be due to some underlying conflict. As an illustration, a sixteen-year-old girl, a patient, was once given the fourteen-year problem-of-fact test: "My neighbor has been having queer visitors. First a doctor came to his house, then a lawyer, then a minister. What do you think happened there?" The girl flushed slightly and answered quickly, "I do not know." It was quite evident that she thought of an answer but would not tell what she had thought. No amount of coaxing would elicit an answer although she responded to other questions of this same intelligence level readily enough. All that the ordinary examiner will think of in such a case is whether or not to give credit for such a response. Credit in the intelligence is not nearly as important as studying the conflict which led to such a reaction. The child needs sympathetic help and advice and if the examiner has not time to give it he should endeavor to see that another qualified person does so.

What the examiner needs to do is constantly to ask himself questions such as the following: When the patient does not give attention to the questions of the test is it because he does not have enough intelligence to do so or is it because his attention is wrapped up in something else? When the patient lacks judgment is this a defect of mental ability or is it the effect of a mental conflict? If it takes an unduly long time for him to respond, is it because the

problem is difficult or because he is distracted by other troublous thoughts? If his memory is apparently poor is it that he cannot remember or that his inner conflicts have made him try to forget?

Furthermore, the treatment accorded should be quite different depending on whether or not the person has low intelligence. We have said that when a person has a mental conflict the thing to do is to analyze it and, having found its cause, to enable the person to make a new and more satisfactory adjustment. When the feeble-minded person has a mental conflict this method will not work. It is very often easy to determine the cause of a conflict in such a case; but a dull child will probably not have the mental ability to meet the situation. The feeble-minded are influenced by authority; and often the elements that are in conflict have been learned from the authoritative dictates of a more intelligent person. To try to readjust such beliefs by reason is hopeless; the only thing that can be done is to teach something more desirable or more rational by the dictates of an even greater authority. If the one who discovers the trouble with such a person has not the requisite authority, he should get someone who has the confidence and respect of the patient to administer the proper teachings.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. The intellectually defective person has a place in society and it is the business of the school to prepare him for a position he is qualified to occupy.
2. Instead of urging a mentally defective child to do work which is too difficult for him, see to it that he gains satisfaction in the accomplishment of work which he is capable of doing.
3. Excessive activity, boasting, irritability, and reckless behavior often indicate that the child is being urged beyond his capacity. Make

the *opportunity* room a place of real opportunity, not a torture chamber.

4. The person with lower intelligence requires more immediate rewards than the superior child.

5. The mental conflicts of a mentally defective child may be intense but are likely to be more simple than those of the superior child. Do not expect him to develop independently a rational solution. He can be given more direct help than the superior child and he can be benefited more by authoritative statements.

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. If a feeble-minded child fails in school, his failure indicates that the system is wrong. Defend this statement.

2. What objective is best substituted for the old standard of an "equal opportunity for all"?

3. What is the relationship between delinquency and feeble-mindedness?

4. Describe three defense devices that the mentally dull person finds particularly effective.

5. Differentiate between the motivation that must be used for a person of subnormal intelligence and for a normal person.

6. Discuss the importance of unlearning

7. Show how an observer may be misled in interpreting the significance of the moron's inability to unlearn.

8. Why is a dull person less likely to have violent mental conflicts than a normal person?

9. Explain why the authority of other persons is so important as a controlling factor in the behavior of morons.

10. How may an intelligence examination be used to examine other characteristics of the child than intelligence?

## CHAPTER XIX

### DELINQUENCY

There are various individuals who never seem to awaken to the fact that reality is an important factor that must be considered if the individual is to make any adequate place for himself in society. This failure to appreciate the gravity of failure to conform leads them into constant and repeated difficulties. In some of these cases it may seem that the real trouble is that the ego drive is too great to be inhibited but, on analysis, the real trouble does not seem to be this. Others with stronger ego drives are able to obtain enough foresight relating to foolish actions to be at least a little discreet. All the individuals who fall into delinquency know with more or less certainty that they will lose in the end, but that seems not to alter them in the least.

While this tendency toward inadequate appreciation of reality would of course be aggravated by any intellectual defect, those that properly fall here often show no marked defect in intellectuality; they are frequently very bright. The failure is a thing apart from intellectual inferiority.

The delinquent hates to admit that his might is limited; he refuses to acknowledge that he has not complete power over his surroundings. The desire for power arises very early in a child and is never escaped. The child wishes for a certain thing and it is supplied to him. Consequently, he is likely to believe that his thought was enough to produce the desired result. The ordinary individual soon learns that he has to have other conditions fulfilled



in connection with a wish in order for the latter to prove effective.

If the desire for dominance persists, these other forces are usually recognized and cultivated. If these latter do not prove effective, the child is likely to revert to the idea that he can influence circumstances by the magical potency of his thoughts. So we find individuals who cannot think of certain things for fear they will come true; or they will spend a vast amount of time thinking about other things so that they will eventuate. For instance, one young man about eighteen years of age told the following: At first he did not dare to think about a house as burning for, if he did, that house might burn and he would then have been the cause of the fire. In this first notion, the fact that anything followed a thought of his proved that the thought was the cause of the event. Later he went further. He argued that if there was a fire and that fire was reported in the newspapers, and he should read about that fire in the paper and think about that house burning, the fire would have been caused by this subsequent thinking about the fire. Here the sequence value was lost and it did not matter whether his thought preceded or followed the event; the thought was nevertheless the cause. So this young man gave up reading papers so as to avoid being the cause of the events he read therein. What a tremendous lift this must give one's ego! How grand, even though unpleasant, to believe that all one needs to do to be the cause of events which have already happened is to think about those events! That an individual can become so far removed from the appreciation of reality is evidence enough that teachers should endeavor with all their powers to keep their children in touch with reality.

When one realizes that a battle is on between his ego and

the environmental realities he may retain the exaltation of his ego by active opposition to reality. This may be a straightforward attempt to change the thing which causes the trouble; and, even though the result may not be in the nature of a complete change or removal of the disturbing element in reality, the fact that the compromise is not all one-sided, not all in favor of reality, gives him some gratification if he can feel that he did not have to surrender in entirety. The change may be slight but the satisfaction may be there just the same. A story is told of a woman whose dog crawled under a piece of furniture. She ordered him out, she coaxed him, she teased him with a bribe, but he persisted to her disgust and anger in his determination to remain in his chosen hiding place. Finally, after she had exhausted all the means at her disposal for dislodging him, she exclaimed: "Well, you just stay there; I *will* be obeyed." Here is the compromise in which the original situation was left just as it was; but a compromise, which meant a virtual surrender, was better than acknowledgment of failure, as far as her peace of mind was concerned. Such satisfaction must be small, to be sure, and hardly to be compared to the pleasure one must feel when he has instituted a radical readjustment so that in the ensuing compromise the environment is radically modified and his ego left practically intact. The normal life is a series of compromises of this sort, for compromises are inevitable. Nevertheless, they are distasteful, and one is always on the lookout for means to avoid such compromises; therefore, before one surrenders he uses different methods of attempting to change environmental conditions so that they will more nearly fit his needs.

The fact that one is repeatedly frustrated may lead him

to think that everything is wrong and that the only way to exist is to "beat the game." The frustrated individual reflects that he did not come into this world at his own volition and that it is up to the world to see that he gets his share of satisfaction from it. Anyone or anything that opposes this is wrong, and he will show those who oppose that they had better not interfere unless they wish to suffer for doing so. Backed by this logic he perhaps starts out to cheat, or steal, and abuse everything and everybody who stands in his way. He finally winds up a common criminal. If clever enough, he may evade authority for some time, and in this case we have a Jesse James — a criminal who had such success in forcing conditions to meet his wishes that he won a rather general admiration because of his success. On the other hand, if he is not exceptional, he may land very early in the juvenile court and reform school; not indeed to be reformed, in many cases, but to bridge the gap between youth, when he is too young to be in jail, and manhood, when he will either be a "repeater" in the criminal courts or obtain such a long sentence that society is rid of him.

These people are rarely repentant, except to be sorry when they are caught. They are bitter and hard; the more they are restrained the more vile their behavior becomes. They will not compromise to the extent that they will admit that they owe anything to society; society owes them all and they are going to collect. If they cannot collect in the open, they will by means of gaining free lodging in some institution.

It can readily be seen that such inadequate appreciation of reality actually produces an abnormal being; so abnormal that treatment is usually hopeless. Why has he become so fixed in these rationalizations? Because as long

as he is fighting conditions as they exist, he is getting satisfaction for his ego. He feels that he would be a coward if he should quit. He gets a deal of satisfaction from being a criminal or he would not be one, and that satisfaction is one of self-congratulation that he alone (or in company with a few others) is brave enough to oppose conditions that would rob him of his last vestige of manhood and make him the same type of groveling simpleton that all the rest of the conformists appear to him to be.

We all admire the man who can change the environment; who can turn a situation completely so as to gain his ends. We all wish that we could do the same. At the same time, we admit that such modification must conform to the rights of others; and when we find that we are incapable of doing this feat, we admit that the situation is too difficult and resign ourselves to the inevitable. Such a compromise, however, requires considerable self-abasement, and the type of man that we have just been describing refuses to compromise to that extent.

It must not be understood that this characterization fits all criminals. There are various types of criminals and this only pictures one single type. That such logic and such a drive to support one's ego is responsible in some cases of chronic criminality is certain. But it is not enough to state that these individuals lack social judgment. We have seen that erroneous judgment is usually based on some real cause and we have traced some of the causes of judgment and behavior errors. Any of the mechanisms we have described might lead to criminality; it is impossible to study criminals without a knowledge of abnormal psychology. The application of this knowledge means an intensive survey and study of each case pre-

sented. Generalizations in this field are most pernicious. When a child is non-social there must be adequate reasons; we may not be able to find them all or to evaluate properly all that we do find, but this problem forms one of the most serious for a teacher and warrants intense study even if the help that can be obtained from science is meager.

The multiplicity of causes that may lead to delinquent conduct can well be illustrated by a study of the various factors that may cause stealing. The stealing of different children may appear similar, but the motives behind the stealing may be entirely different. Treatment must be determined by the underlying motives of the child and not by the value of the stolen articles nor by the manner in which the stealing occurred.

Some children steal because of a fundamental lack of the appreciation of property rights. In some homes there is a sort of communistic atmosphere where no one owns anything and each member of the family feels free to appropriate anything that he wishes. When a child who is raised in such an atmosphere extends his contacts outside the home, he is likely to take the same attitude toward the property of other children that he did to the articles in the home. It is much better for each member of a family to have certain definite possessions and for the children to learn to respect the rights of the owner. The lack of the sense of ownership is much more likely to appear in young children than in older ones. When it does occur in more mature children, it indicates a lack of education in the fundamentals of ownership.

When stealing can be traced to such a lack of education it is a mistake to attempt to impress upon the child the immoral nature of stealing. He must be shown that respect for the rights of others is a mutually satisfactory

arrangement, provided there is a universal willingness to subscribe to the principles of ownership.

A child learns the rights of property very early if he is properly guided and also learns how to abuse the rights of others if trained to do so. It is surprising how easily an appeal can function if made at the right time. A certain father, who was looking for any early evidence of dishonesty in his son with the idea of teaching his child to be honest, observed the boy pick up a hammer one day when he was out walking. The boy was delighted and said, "See what I found?" The father stopped and asked him where he found it. The boy replied, "On the sidewalk." The father then asked the boy if sometimes he did not leave his toys on the sidewalk, and after he had confessed that he did, the father said: "Well, suppose you left your wagon out in front of the house and some other boy came along and said that it was lost and that he had found it and would take it away, how would you like that?" The boy studied a bit, went back and dropped the hammer where he had found it, and went on perfectly satisfied.

Some children steal because they have developed an inordinate desire for some object, such as money. Such an extreme hunger usually comes from the fact that the child has been deprived of the coveted article. For example, one boy of eight was reported for habitual stealing of money. In the test room some money was scattered on the table in a seemingly careless fashion and the reactions of the boy to this money were studied. He seemed fascinated by it and could not keep his eyes from gazing at it. When he thought the examiner was not looking, he made little involuntary movements with his hands toward the money which became more and more pronounced until finally he took some of the coins. Certainly, the intense

longing for money was the element that needed modification in this case. Correction was accomplished with relative ease when the boy's parents were induced to permit him to have an abundance of money in small denominations. At first he played with it with the avidity of a starved child but, as the novelty wore off, he became less obsessed with its importance. He was then taught how to spend it to the best advantage. In other words, he lost his almost pathological appetite for money and saw it as a medium of exchange which brought most satisfaction when wisely used.

Another child stole money because he had heard it discussed so much in his home that he came to believe that it was the most important thing in the world. In addition, he had some friends who had more money than he did and their use of it to treat friends to movie shows and candy made him feel that no one could win social approval without an adequate supply. Consequently, he stole money in order to maintain his social prestige. Here again, the essential problem was not to give lessons in honesty but to teach the child how to utilize more wholesome ways to gain friends than by showering them with gifts.

In another instructive case, stealing was the expression of an urge on the part of a young man to obtain freedom. A study of his history showed that he had stolen from the time he was a little boy and, in spite of punishments and admonitions from both his parents, he had become progressively worse until he was thought to be a kleptomaniac.<sup>1</sup> This boy stole money from his family, from friends, and from strangers, but was most adept in forging checks with his father's name. The element in the situation that seemed most incongruous to the father

<sup>1</sup> A kleptomaniac is a person who has a pathological compulsion to steal.

was the fact that he had spent a great amount of time and energy teaching his son to be honest. At least, honesty was what he thought he had been teaching his son. He had gone about it by giving him an allowance and by teaching him to keep a strict accounting of all his expenditures. Accurate account keeping seemed to the father to be the essential element in honesty. Furthermore, the father reported that the use made of the stolen money by his son was rather strange. He spent it largely on useless objects. For example, he would forge a check and spend the money taking the boys for taxi rides through the city. His father owned several cars, any one of which he could have used to take his friends for rides, but he preferred to take them in taxicabs with stolen money to pay the bills. He would steal articles from stores for which he had no need.

Upon questioning, the father admitted that, if his son had asked him for money for any of these foolish uses, he would have argued with him upon the folly of spending money in any such manner. In short, the only way in which the boy could spend even the tiniest sum without consultation with his father, either before or after the expenditure, was by stealing it. He stole, not because of any abnormal impulse to steal, but because he wanted the privilege of doing a few things without having an argument about it.

Sometimes the theft of a trivial and useless article may symbolize, or be a substitute for, some repressed impulse of which the child is totally unconscious. For example, a child may have been taught with such thoroughness to repress his erotic impulses that he is not consciously aware of their existence. They manifest themselves only in a vague restless urge to do something, in a feeling that he



wants to do some forbidden act. He has no idea what the act is but feels that he must do something bad. The evils of stealing have been preached to him so loudly and repeatedly that stealing represents to him the true symbol of badness. Feeling the urge to do something bad, he steals any trivial and useless object that is presented to him. After he has stolen he feels a strange relief. He knows not why he stole, he has no use for the article, he merely responded to an urge to act and, having stolen, he feels better.

The pattern described above is merely typical and no one case follows this specific outline. When a child steals something for which he has no use, when he can offer no reason for stealing except a restless urge to take something, and when the whole episode seems to be the expression of a kind of dreamy state, the teacher would do well to regard the stealing as an unconscious symbolization of a conflict of a different order. In such cases it does no good and may even do harm to try to correct the difficulty by giving moral instructions.

Oftentimes the parent may be the direct cause of the child's learning to lie or steal. For example, a little girl came home from school late one afternoon and her mother asked her where she had been. She told the truth and said that she had gone to the home of a girl friend to play, whereupon the mother gave the girl a whipping. The girl of course subconsciously interpreted this as a punishment for telling the truth. A few days later she again went to the home of this girl friend after school and came home late. When asked where she had been she lied and said that the teacher had kept her after school; whereupon, the mother did not say or do anything further. This of course was a reward for telling a lie. Why should a girl so trained

not continue to lie? She would lack intelligence if she did not.

Having learned to steal, it is remarkable how strongly the tendency persists and how early a child can become a real thief. The following case was given the writer by an alert school principal. A dollar bill had been stolen and the principal was firmly convinced that a certain girl had taken it and still had it on her person because she had had no chance to dispose of it. He called this girl into his office and tried in every reasonable way to induce her to confess, but this she would not do. Finally, he called the school nurse and had the child thoroughly searched but with no success. Still not convinced, he tried one final bold move. He told her that he had done his best to help her; but, since she continued to lie to him, the only thing left for him was to call the police. He went to the telephone and while holding down the hook pretended to be calling the police. This was just a little too much for her and she broke down and confessed that she had taken the dollar, and reaching down she pulled it from between the layers of her shoe sole. She had ripped the stitching and hidden it there. This girl was less than ten years of age and yet had become so hardened that she could go through an extensive grilling with not the slightest suggestion of a confession. This girl did not lack intelligence nor did she fail to understand the non-social nature of her conduct. She had learned that she was clever enough to outwit others and had not hesitated to do so. Her case shows that even a normal child may learn to be dishonest to such a degree as to present the appearance of a hardened criminal.

The impulse to pass judgment upon a child who seems to be immune to admonitions is too strong in most adults.

It is much more easy to pronounce the judgment that the child is a hardened criminal than it is to search for the cause of the misconduct. Where adequate study has been made the rewards are always exceedingly gratifying.

A boy was recently brought to a clinic by his teacher, who complained that the boy did not try to learn and played truant shamelessly. He ran about constantly with a boy two years his senior who influenced him to steal and to commit other non-social acts. On examination this boy was found to have an intelligence quotient of 112. The question was, why did he behave as he did? At first glance the conventional thing would have been to select as the explanation the fact that he had a bad companion by whom he was influenced. But why should a boy of superior intelligence do what some other boy told him to do when he found that he got into difficulties thereby? Further, the patient himself confessed with no great hesitation that when he stole something, his comrade "beat him up" if he tried to keep what he had stolen, and took it from him, never allowing him to have any of the loot. In spite of this, he kept on stealing whenever told to do so by this particular boy. Hence we might say that he was afraid of the bigger boy; but if he was afraid, we are at a loss to account for his conduct in connection with this boy. He was constantly on the hunt for him. He would stay away from school and hunt for this boy and together they would get into some mischief. Now, when an intelligent boy follows a boy who bullies him, gets him into trouble, and does not even allow him a portion of the rewards of their crimes, there must be some fundamental reason for the attachment.

When we investigated the family condition of this boy, we found that he had five sisters and one small brother.

Without the least hesitation he expressed hatred for his sisters and girls in general. It seems his sisters teased him, pulled his hair, and took away books when he was reading and ran off with them. His father punished him severely for his escapades but his mother did not. Asked why his mother did not punish him, he asserted that she was not big enough. In spite of the whippings by the father, he asserted that he thought much more of his father than of his mother — his reason being that his father bought him things while the mother would not.

Another important fact came out when he was asked why he did not go to school. At first he said it was because he did not like the teachers; they punished him when he was late and so he would not go at all. An attempt was made to appeal to his ambition. We asked him whether he did not want to do something worth while in life. Of course he assented. He was told that he could not succeed if he did not learn, and that going to school was essential to learning. Immediately he bristled up, threw out his chest and said, "My father never went to school, so why should I?"

We all know that a boy is very apt to fix on his father as his ideal, and it was quite evident that this boy thought that his father was perfect. Further questioning strengthened the fact. His father no doubt had boasted that he had gotten along without going to school. The boy, emulating his father, wanted to do the same. The father boasted about how much he read and how he had learned in this manner. Our patient was extremely fond of reading and resented the least interference in this; he hated his sisters because they took his books, that is, kept him from being just like his father. The whippings he secured from

his father were evidence that he was getting the attention of the one he admired most.

There is, further, little doubt that the boy comrade was a father substitute; he was older than the patient and treated him with the same show of authority that the father did. This sort of analysis gives not only a fundamental cause but furnishes a means of correction. The teacher was told to go to the father and tell him frankly that he was the cause of the delinquency of his son and explain just why. The way to get the boy over his trouble was to have the father influence the change; he had caused the other line of conduct and he alone could modify it now. He was told to cease boasting that he had never gone to school and to express sorrow that he had not done so, and to follow this by encouraging the boy in his school work and showing an interest in it. Furthermore, since the bad companion was a substitute for the father, he was told that he could easily win the boy from this association by taking the time to be a comrade to the boy until the bad comrade was forgotten. He was told not to beat the boy for not going to school, for he had tried this and had failed. In a case of this sort, a boy does not care what his father orders him to do — he wants to be like the father even if it means disobedience. The father may order the boy not to smoke, for instance, and may whip him if he catches him at it; but if, in smoking, the boy is like the father, he has taken a step toward his ideal and he is willing to take a whipping in return for the satisfaction thus experienced.

As in all other instances of behavior difficulties, the source of satisfaction must be located and the modification must begin there. If the boy, in emulating the father, does an unsocial thing, then the father must do something else to get the boy to imitate that. This change must be

genuine, however, for the boy will soon detect any superficial behavior on the part of the father; and if the father simply says once that he wishes he had gone to school, and then shows in a thousand ways that he is glad he did not, the boy will know that he is lying and will not be deceived in the slightest.

A study of childhood delinquency is convincing evidence that misconduct is learned, and the conclusion which inevitably follows is that the treatment that should be accorded to the delinquent child is re-education rather than retributive punishment. If a child does not understand property rights, he should be taught to guard his own possessions and to have respect for the property of others. If a child has an abnormal craving for some object, that craving should be satisfied in some legitimate manner so as to decrease the intensity of the hunger. If a child overestimates the significance of the possession of a certain article, the standards of value should be corrected. If delinquency is used as a means to gain freedom from excessive restraint, the important procedure would be to teach the child to develop a more wholesome type of independence, one where his independence did not result in injury to others. Finally, if the delinquency is the indirect expression of some unconscious urge which has been repressed, the actual nature of the underlying urge must be learned and the child taught to get a more conventional outlet for it.

Some children seem to lack the ability to learn moral judgments. They seem unable to grasp the idea of social responsibility. Analysis of such cases usually reveals that they have learned that, when they do things that bring them what they wish, even if that thing is contrary to law and order, someone will shield them. They may have to

simulate disease, position, an "irresistible impulse," a period of forgetfulness, a headache, or kleptomania; but these are simply part of their scheme for outwitting society. They are non-social because they have been clever enough to "put it over" (as they express it) in the past. They have distorted values because they have been taught them by elders who have permitted themselves to be duped.

This tendency does not always take the form of criminal or non-social acts. We see the same thing in persons who are continually getting into all sorts of mishaps and who must be helped by charitable organizations or private individuals who have ultratender hearts. They get into trouble not because they have not sense enough to keep out — they can foresee as well as anyone what the consequences will be; but because they trust to luck that something will turn up. It usually does, in the form of someone who takes pity on them.

For instance, a woman of this type who had been very much abused and could not keep out of unfortunate adventures was employed in the kitchens of a hospital. She had to borrow money to live on the first month till she got her pay. She paid back part of her debts and then managed to get enough to have her photograph taken. She got the highest priced photographs she could find and had a dozen prints made. Two of these she stood up in her room and one in the kitchen where she worked. The rest she sent to various persons who had abused her during her checkered career. Before she got out of the financial obligations which this episode brought on, she bought a fine fur coat which she proceeded to wear over her kitchen clothes. If she wanted something she bought it, regardless of the financial obligations involved. She con-

stantly got into squabbles with other employees of the hospital; always in such a way as to obtain sympathy from someone. After some petty affair she would stay away from work and have to be traced and calmed down before she could be induced to come back. One day when she did not come to work, a social worker went after her and found the house in which she lived tightly locked but surrounded by the odor of illuminating gas. A force was called, who broke in and found that no gas was turned on anywhere. It evidently had been turned on and then turned off again. The woman was in her room lying on her bed with her open Bible beside her. After having been assisted through a number of such episodes, she suddenly left town, leaving behind a most scathing note, in which she stated that she had never received such vile treatment in her life, and she hoped never to lay eyes on that place again.

In such a case one can usually trace a history which shows that the person has been consistently rewarded for non-social conduct or has been constantly helped whenever he got into a difficulty. When a person is always rewarded for certain acts, why should he not continue to do them? If one confesses that he is so vulnerable, why should not the person to whom this confession is made take advantage? Why should he work when he can get others to do it and turn over the spoils to him? If, when a boy or a girl forges a check, the father quickly redeems it, why should he not continue to do so whenever he wants money? Little moral speeches or platitudes about the policy of honesty have no weight when dishonesty gratifies the child's desires and is always rewarded.

These people have a lack of appreciation of reality. Their viewpoint is not a balanced one, for they fail to see



that, in the long run, they will lose by their tactics; but they are not imbeciles in any sense. The term moral imbecile is a misnomer. They are not moral imbeciles. They have learned habits which persist because they have been definitely fixed in such a way that they are extremely hard to modify. If one takes this view, the situation is not so hopeless as it may seem. If we look on these non-social types as the result of innate lacks, the situation is out of our grasp. If we take the point of view that, even if some innate tendency may further the formation of such perverse types, it can only be the groundwork for the formation of a habit, we can look for the first signs of an inadequate appreciation of reality and make sure that the child does get an adequate notion of the adjustments he must make.

We think we have trained a child to be good when we have made him act as we wish. We pay little or no attention to the ideas he has in regard to the things we forbid him to do. We prevent the doing of a thing that the child thinks would cause him pleasure, and there is always a feeling of loss connected with it. The child says, "No, I would never do that; it is bad!" But he adds to himself, "But wouldn't it be great fun if I only could?" The child may become convinced that the most desirable things in life are the bad things. He represses the wish to do them — the thought of doing them — but he still does want to do them; and so they come out in dreams or in sleepwalking or in some other way.

This condition often starts from a false philosophy on the part of the teacher which reflects itself in her teaching. She believes that she has sacrificed much happiness by being good and tries to teach the children to be as self-sacrificing as she is — to give up their happiness in return

for virtue. She may not say this in so many words but her attitude reflects it. A sacrifice involves the giving up of something desirable, and when one talks of or intimates sacrifice in connection with being good, one implies the giving up of something.

The teacher needs to get into her own philosophy the fact that the thing which brings the most happiness is the moral thing, and then train her children by that same method. Let them learn by simple facts that the immoral brings suffering automatically and the children will have little trouble in suppressing immoral desires. They are giving up nothing of comparative value in any such suppression; they are gaining. Make them see that they gain by being good.

A child steals. The teacher catches him. She takes away the stolen article and punishes him. She thinks that she has made him see that it does not pay to be dishonest. Instead she has made him see that it does not pay to get caught, and he thinks how much fun he could have had with the stolen article if he had only been clever enough not to be caught. The training has not made him honest; it has made him afraid of being detected in dishonesty. He dreams of the time when he can steal all he wants and never be caught. He has repressed his dishonesty, claims outwardly that he will steal no more, and may not steal again; but he longs for a situation where he could steal. Honesty has become a part of his behavior but not a part of his subconscious personality. This whole method of teaching is wrong. He is taught to be dishonest because the law says he must be honest. He should be taught that honesty is a social necessity; it is necessary for his own happiness. Any breach on his part should bring him loss without any intervention of punishment by the teacher.

The teacher may manipulate things so that he is punished automatically but she must keep herself in the background. In other words, the child must learn that if he steals, everyone has an equal right to steal, and if everyone steals he, too, will lose his treasures. He should be honest because he does not want people to steal from him. This understanding will make him genuinely honest, for he will have no sneaking desire to steal. Convince him that he is the greatest loser when he disobeys the moral law and he will be moral. If this is not done he may be forced to obey the law but he will not be kept from wanting to break it. If a child is taught from the beginning that morality is a social, co-operative scheme organized for the benefit of each individual, he will refrain from being immoral, not because someone has demanded it, nor because he is afraid of being caught, but because he does not desire to be immoral. He should be taught that he is really the loser if he is immoral. He will then not possess any hidden notion that bad acts are fundamentally pleasant. He will have learned that they are not.

We have placed, heretofore, too much emphasis on the outward conduct and not enough on the hidden life of children. We force certain things with such crude methods that the child is faced with a dilemma that he has no way to resolve. He adopts some queer solution and then, when he becomes an adult, we look on in pity because he has become "insane," or at least "peculiar." Or we force him into some delinquency and brand him as a criminal. A little timely help from an understanding teacher may prevent such tragedies.

## PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. The child's social attitude is the result of his teaching. Teach him that society is a co-operative scheme that requires the participation of all, and that if he fails to participate he loses thereby.

2. When a child develops unsocial tendencies he has learned them. Try to discover how he learned them. This will give the clue as to how to check them.

3. Refrain from passing judgment upon the delinquent act itself. Delinquency is an attempt to adjust on the part of the child. Teach him a better way to resolve his conflicts in place of studying how to make him pay the penalty for his acts.

## QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How may a child develop a hostile attitude toward society?
2. Psychologically what should be our attitude toward the criminal?
3. Outline some of the varied causes that might be behind delinquent acts which have the same outward appearance in all cases.
4. Explain the mechanism behind compulsive stealing.
5. Show how a boy's devotion for his father might lead to misconduct.
6. Explain how dishonesty may be taught inadvertently to children.
7. How may stealing be a symbol for a repressed impulse?
8. Describe the lack of judgment of the confirmed thief.
9. How can delinquency be traced to a false estimation of social responsibility?
10. How do tenderhearted persons sometimes assist in the development of delinquency?

## CHAPTER XX

### MENTAL HYGIENE

How can a sane mental hygiene program be built into the school system? The ideal program would be to instruct every teacher in the principles of mental hygiene so that each step in the child's education could be part of a steady march toward mature mental stamina.

The teacher should be trained so as to have her teaching centered around the child rather than around subject matter. Subject matter should not be slighted, but the child will profit by exposure to school subjects only when they are presented to him in such a manner that he can be modified by them. Each teacher should understand the individual differences in her pupils and be intent upon bringing out the best in each child. What is best for each child can be determined only by a study of the child and never by the preconceived opinion of some teacher who is more concerned with the subject she is teaching than she is in the children she teaches. An intense interest in the pupils by every teacher in the school system is the first step toward a sound mental hygiene program.

This interest in the pupil must not remain on the emotional level. It must be the outgrowth of profound understanding of the significance of personal peculiarities. This understanding can come only by a study of the maladjustments of children. The teacher must keep in mind that each child is trying to adjust and that teaching is merely guidance in the adjustment process. How can she guide him intelligently unless she sees the significance of minor

deviations and knows the effects of certain behavior patterns should they be continued? The teacher must get away from considering the child normal or abnormal, stubborn or tractable, moral or immoral, in either a eulogistic or derogatory sense. She must look on the actions of children as habits which are either good or bad in proportion to their effect on the child's ultimate mental health.

Even if we do train all teachers in the principles of mental hygiene, there will be individual differences in the ability of teachers to apply them. Some children will be more difficult to handle than others because of the faulty training they have received in their homes and in the community outside the school. Even the best teacher will be baffled at times and will need some place to turn for help in the more difficult cases. Therefore, it would be well for every school to have one teacher, selected because of her superior skill in human understanding and her knowledge of mental disorders, to act as a consultant. The amount of time that she should devote to such work will be determined by the needs of the school. These needs, in turn, will grow as the majority of teachers gain in insight. Consultations between such a specialist and the regular teacher would enable many a problem to be cleared in its incipient stages and greater maladjustments could thereby be averted.

In a system that is large enough to warrant it, there should be a central clinic to which the consultant in each school could refer cases which proved to be too much for her. In many of the larger school systems this program is being operated with success. It could readily be adapted to areas with less dense population. The central behavior clinic could be located in the county seat and used as a consulting center for all the schools in the county.

A very important aspect of this work which is often overlooked is the cultivation of the proper attitude of the children and the parents toward such remedial and preventive work. It would be well to call the central clinic by some name which did not suggest that children who are examined are peculiar in any way.<sup>4</sup> It could be called a guidance bureau. Whatever the name, the children must feel that it is a treat to be able to take the tests and to talk with the consultants. They are not sent there as a punishment, not because they are dull, not because they are peculiar, but because they understand that children differ from each other and the clinic is a means of determining how to do the best for each child. When such an atmosphere pervades the consultant work, children enjoy being tested and beg to be privileged to talk to the psychologist or consultant. The importance of this wholesome atmosphere cannot be too strongly emphasized. Without it any mental hygiene work is doomed to failure. You may drag a child into a medical clinic against his will and cure his bodily ailments in spite of his protests; but you cannot be of any assistance to a child who has mental difficulties if you use any such highhanded methods.<sup>5</sup>

There are various techniques that have been found valuable in studying the maladjustments of children. These techniques can be applied more thoroughly by a specialist in the central clinic, to be sure, but they can also be used by each teacher in her everyday teaching if she is familiar with them and understands their significance. Indeed, there is an added value given them when they are used in the classroom in that the situation is less artificial than it would be in a clinic and the child is more free to express himself without restraint.

1. *Gain the confidence of the child.* This can never be done by urging the child to tell everything, nor by promises that he will not be punished, nor by assurances that he can trust his teacher. There are three conditions that are absolutely essential if the teacher wishes to get the confidence of a child.

First, she must learn to listen to him. Most teachers talk too much and thus prevent the child from talking. The teacher may say that she has not time to listen. It does not take much time. The child will get the impression that he will be heard if the teacher will but give him some of the time that she ordinarily takes in talking herself. For example, when a child comes to ask for advice he often does not want advice, he wants a chance to talk. If the teacher will refrain from giving advice on such occasions she will learn much and, if she merely looks attentive, the child will go on and tell more. After he has talked it out thoroughly, the advice will usually be unnecessary. The opportunity to talk freely about his problem will often bring the solution. The good mental hygienist must learn to listen.

Listening must, in the second place, be accompanied by a total lack of emotional prejudice. The child usually starts to tell confidential matter with caution in order to sound out the teacher and to determine how much he can tell. He is looking for emotional prejudices and when he finds them he goes no further. The teacher cannot afford to show disapproval, even of an immoral act, when the child is attempting to express himself about it.

In the third place, confidence is wholly dependent upon the fidelity of the teacher. Anything told her in confidence must go in both ears and stay inside her head. Should any hint of it come through her tongue the child will never



trust her again, and rightly so. The mental hygienist must never be a gossip. If the teacher is not willing to keep confidences, she is performing an immoral act in receiving them.

Sometimes the mere narration of a difficulty will clear it up entirely for the child. The Freudian psychologists have given the name *catharsis* to the beneficial effect that comes from telling one's difficulty to another. Emotional tensions are often relieved to such an extent by merely talking about a difficulty that nothing more needs to be done. The teacher may feel, after she has listened, that she is helpless to do anything about the matter. She may not need to do anything.

Above all, listening should not be confused with inquisitive probing. Nothing will so quickly block confidence as prying questions. Let the child tell just as much as he desires. If the previous three rules are observed he will freely tell all that he needs to tell. He may not tell as much as he would like at the first interview but, when he finds that he can talk, he will tell more and more. If the teacher probes more from the child than he is perfectly willing to tell, he will regret having told so much and will hate her for having wormed it out of him. We suspect the person who wants to know too much.

2. *Observe the child in spontaneous play situations.* Play activities will usually bring out the fundamental attitudes of the different children toward each other. If a child has some dominant conflict, it will often manifest itself in the manner in which he plays. In making observations, the teacher must not be content with a superficial judgment as to his degree of co-operativeness in play, of his good sportsmanship. What she wants to discover is the possible presence of such attitudes as hate, suspicion, withdrawal,

cruelty, overaggressiveness, extreme submission, fearfulness, anxiety symptoms, emotional infantilism, and the like. In short, she wants to discover any evidences of incipient maladjustments of the sort we have described throughout this book.

3. *Observe the spontaneous drawings of the child.* Search for any theme that repeats itself in his drawings. He may indicate such characteristics as inferiority feelings; he may show fear reactions; he may indicate his attitude toward certain tabooed subjects through the symbols he uses; he may manifest instability; or he may indicate a meticulous attention to details to such a degree as to suggest an anxiety condition. In short, the teacher can speculate as to the type of child who would portray the objects that the child draws in the manner in which he does it.

4. *Listen to the imaginary recitals of the child.* If the child is encouraged to "tell a story" he is very likely to center his tale upon themes which are of dominant interest to him. The degree to which he tends to withdraw from reality may thus be revealed, the nature of the situations which encourage such withdrawal may be discovered, and the defense devices which he uses to resolve his difficulties will usually be indicated.

5. *Observe the reactions of the child to the teacher or consultant.* As the confidence of the child is gained he will react emotionally to the teacher in a manner similar to the way he would react to his father, mother, or other persons. If he is antagonistic to his mother, for example, he may manifest antagonism to the teacher. If he expects his mother to pamper him, he may strive to get the teacher to pamper him also. If, instead of taking the reactions of the child as a personal matter, the teacher studies them as fundamental reactions which were developed toward other

individuals, she will gain much insight into the child's emotional reactions to significant people. The psychoanalysts call this sort of reaction a *transfer*. The child will transfer to his teacher the sort of attitude that he has learned to express toward his mother, father, grandmother, or other intimately associated individuals. .

6, *Listen to what the child says about other persons.* You can tell more about a child by what he says about others than by what they say about him. This does not mean, of course, that the teacher should encourage backbiting and tattling. She is not searching for factual matter, she is studying the fundamental attitude of the child and these are clearly revealed in his characterizations of other persons.<sup>1</sup> .

Having made an unimpassioned decision as to what is desirable and what is undesirable in a given child, the next step is to get rid of the undesirable. Now, oftentimes, this cannot be done merely by placing a block in front of a particular line of activity. The child may have in some way acquired a tremendous urge to do a certain thing. Merely to place a check upon that act simply dams up that urge so that it is very likely to express itself in another quite unexpected form. What should be done is to make sure of the nature of the urge back of an undesirable act and then to furnish the child with a more desirable outlet at the same time that the undesirable one is blocked. To keep saying, "don't, don't" to an active boy is the sheerest kind of folly. Give him something to do, keep him busy and he will be pleased with the teacher, himself, school, and life in general.

In dealing with children, the main thing is not merely to study what they say and do, but also to study the motives behind their conduct. This is more important as the ac-

tions become queer. Queer acts are as surely motivated as are conventional ones but, as they become queer, they become farther and farther removed from the main underlying motive. And as they become far removed from the main motive, it becomes more and more essential to learn what that motive is. If the motive is clear and above-board, the child will have no reason to hide it, and the actions will not be queer. In such a case he is not ashamed of his motives. If some motive is operating which he will not confess freely, his acts are all attempts to conceal this motive and become correspondingly queer and unusual. Hence, a good procedure for a teacher to use is to observe any unusual conduct and follow this with an attempt to unearth the motive behind the conduct.

In evolving a program of treatment it is well to keep in mind that there are always a number of contributing factors to the maladjustment. Correct the most tangible factor first and then proceed to those which are most difficult to control.

There are always immediate and transient elements and those which are more permanent. Sometimes it is well to deal with the temporary situation first. The error that is often made is to consider the case closed when a temporary adjustment has been made. The best plan is to make sure that long standing factors are remedied, if possible, even though they may not have been major elements in the immediate maladjustment. Temporary relief may be demanded, but the underlying factors that might pave the way for future difficulties should also be carefully studied and, in the periods of seeming good adjustment, these can be modified.

Every maladjustment has two aspects; the precipitating conflict and the defense mechanism that the child has

adopted to meet his difficulty. If attention is given only to the conflict, the child may still have the tendency to use a faulty defense mechanism at some future time when a conflict of an entirely different sort is encountered. In general, it is better to be more concerned with the type of defense that the child is attempting to make than it is to smooth out his conflicts. He will always have conflicts and, even though the present one is removed, there will be new ones in the future. Prepare him for these.

Again, the teacher must have in mind all the available agencies at hand that may be used to effect a readjustment. There are organized play groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Y.M.C.A.'s, boys' clubs, summer camps, and the like. A child may be adjusted better by activities in such social organizations than by any amount of discussion, even with the most understanding teacher. The teacher must learn not to take too much pride in the direct part she plays in helping the child to adjust. She may do much more by directing him into some situation where she has no immediate influence. .

This substitution of a new line of activity for one in which we acknowledge failure is an important part of mental adjustment. It is the alternative for one of the compromises which lead to abnormal behavior of the types already described. If one's difficulty is clearly recognized and it is candidly admitted that one desires to have or to do something which is out of the question, one can then choose the substitute which most appeals to him in place of the denied activity. These substitutions are commonly known as *sublimations*. This word comes from *sub* meaning *below* and *limen* meaning *threshold*. It means that one thing is placed beneath the threshold and comes to expression only in a different or disguised form. A vast

number of life's activities are sublimations of this sort and often come without the conscious effort of the person concerned. If a substitute of this sort is adopted unconsciously and the individual has made a good adjustment, there is no reason why he should be reproached or ridiculed because he may not understand its nature. But one can always make a better sublimation if he is conscious of what he is doing; so, if the teacher can direct the energy of the child into proper outlets and at the same time let him see what is going on in his mental life, the child will develop into a stronger adult than if he makes these sublimations blindly.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the activities which one might adopt to replace some denied pleasure. They are as numerous and complex as life itself. The one who openly avers that all his motives are recognized, that he understands himself thoroughly, is sure to be doing numerous things for reasons that he does not understand. But, even though one need not know the ultimate motive for every act he performs, it is necessary for a well-balanced life to understand the mechanism of this transfer so that if one does something peculiar he can be on the alert to ascertain what lies behind such conduct.

Religion serves as one of the best lines of activity for the expression of ungratified desires. A child up to the age of adolescence gets along very well without any vivid religious experience. At adolescence his heterosexual tendencies begin to develop and he meets with social blocks in connection with these developments. To divert part of his love life to the adoration of a supreme being serves as a fine outlet for the ungratified portion of his love life and tides the youth over this most difficult period in his life. Other crises may lead to the same sort of substitution.

Failure in winning a life partner, disappointment in marriage, failure in business, death of relatives, or social or professional failures may all find shelter in religious expression. Even when an individual comes to old age with the realization that his whole life has been a failure, when everything he has tried has gone wrong, religion still provides a hope that beyond this life lies a future life where one will be rid of the imperfections which here retarded his progress and blocked every attempted expression. Thus, from adolescence, when life's storms first become turbulent, until old age, religion provides a substitute for all disappointments from the mildest to the most keen.

Another fine outlet for unfulfilled desires is social service. This branches out in all sorts of directions and gives rise to varied types of opportunity for expression, in some directions even more diversified than religion. Oftentimes a combination of religion and social service furnishes the best outlet. Women who have failed to marry, or having married, have failed to give birth to children, may substitute social work in maternity hospitals or orphanages for the disappointments suffered.

Athletics is one of the best lines of activity to be emphasized in adolescent life. This provides not only a mental outlet but gives an opportunity for bubbling youth to work off some of its surplus physical energy. The adolescent boy or girl who for some reason or other seems to have an unusually strong libido can do no better than to engage in active sports. Not only does this divert the physical energy toward other things than sex, but gives the child a glow and warmth that prove to be a fine substitute. It is part of the functions of teachers to demand that the pupils get plenty of healthful exercise. A vast number of

symptoms can be "worked off" in the gymnasium; and if the teacher sees some of the danger signals that we have enumerated and is at a total loss what to do, she can make no mistake by getting the child into some active gymnasium work, or if there is no gymnasium, into some sort of outdoor sport.

• Poetry, art, and drama are substitutes which give a good outlet for the creative impulse. The artist can escape the crass vulgarities of life by hiding them under the beautiful. By means of the drama one can substitute for an exhibitionistic tendency a form of self-display which is not only gratifying to himself but highly valuable to the spectator. Poetry is an admirable vehicle for the expression of one's innermost life. Not only do these substitutes give the individual who adopts them a highly socialized form of expression for unfulfilled desires, they likewise add to the general social wealth, and those who are not capable of producing are at least able to adopt as substitutes the productions of others.

• Science, business, professional life, or any activity may serve to sublimate repressed need. Oftentimes the vocation that one chooses serves this very purpose, and hence this factor should be strongly considered in advising a young person as to his future work. If a vocation has been selected which does not provide such an outlet, then the person can often find an outlet in an avocation, some interest separate from the one which has been selected as a means of livelihood. Thus, we find prominent business men spending their spare time tinkering with automobiles, raising vegetables in back yards, or conducting amateur photograph studios. These men will express the keenest delight over the most trivial successes in these lines even though they fail to see why their pleasure is so keen.



Vocational guidance based on ability alone will always be subject to the drawback that it does not consider emotional outlets for buried mental conflicts. One may have the intelligence to do a certain type of work, but if that work is constantly bringing to the foreground some mental disturbance, the individual will loathe his work and never make a success of it.

The vocational guidance worker, if he is to do his work satisfactorily, must know the abnormal side of human nature, be able to interpret minor symptoms, and be able to use the information he derives from such observation in the direction of the activities of those who apply to him for advice. Success is not merely a matter of ability, as everyone knows; but many fail to realize that success comes largely as the result of the fact that a certain type of work provides an adequate outlet for otherwise unsocial or ungratified social tendencies. Many a successful scientist is successful because his "peeping" propensity can get expression in scientific curiosity; many a successful orator is so because this oratory is a social substitute for exhibitionism or a compensation for a feeling of inferiority; a surgeon is sometimes successful because surgery provides a harmless and useful outlet for his tendency toward cruelty; a teacher loves her teaching because it gives an outlet for an ungratified mother impulse; a business man finds in business competition a successful outlet for a fighting propensity; one who has an inferiority feeling can find an adequate compensation in any executive position where he can dictate to his fellows; either man or woman may get in club life an adequate outlet for a homosexual tendency. Thus we might go through the entire list of life's vocations and interests and determine what conflicts each may eliminate or diminish; then we could use this outline

in our vocational guidance program. Certainly a program which considers these facts is going to be more successful than one that blithely ignores the underlying emotional drives of life.

One does not need to make a complete analysis of the life of the youth who is in need of guidance in order to give valuable advice. One can watch the reactions of the child in different situations designed to bring out the different underlying factors, and on this basis determine what is working in his mind. We urge here, what we stated at the beginning, that the teacher get away from a blind attitude toward the peculiarities of her students, in order that she may put a knowledge of these to good use in guiding the children she has in her charge.

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#### PRACTICAL HINTS FOR TEACHERS

1. Never let a child fail completely. If he fails teach him to fail forward, to jump up and to go on. Never emphasize the permanent effects of a mistake.
2. Teach a child to face his errors but teach him to do it in a way that will prevent a recurrence.
3. Do not prod a child to confess his shortcomings. Adjustment does not mean a display of all one's weaknesses to others; it means insight. One does not need to expose himself to get insight.
4. Never violate the confidence of a child, especially if he has made a confession to you. If, of his own volition, he confesses a shortcoming, do not punish him for the thing that he has confessed; some form of reparation may be made in cases where the child can see that justice requires this.

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the importance of child centered education.
2. What part can the teacher play in mental hygiene?
3. Outline the way in which a guidance bureau should function.
4. Enumerate the methods that should be observed in gaining the confidence of a child.

5. Describe the way in which observation of play and drawings, and listening to imaginations of the child can be used to understand him.
6. Explain what is meant by transfer.
7. What is the importance of the child's characterization of others?
8. Explain the interrelation of conflict with defense mechanisms.
9. What is a sublimation?
10. Outline some valuable forms that sublimation may take.

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